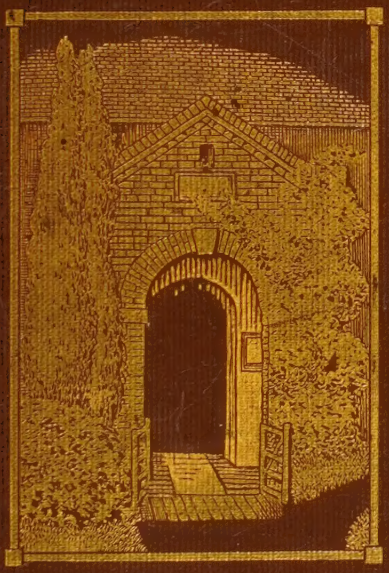
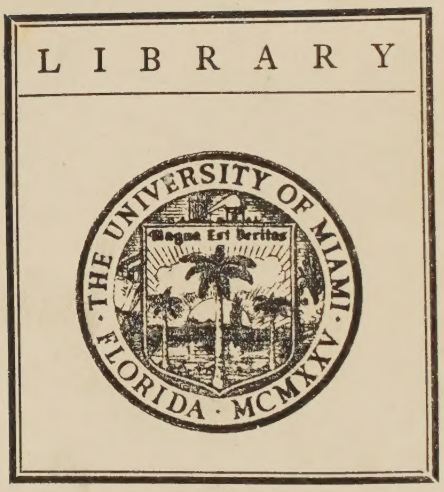
SOME FAMOUS COUNTRY PARISHES



EZRA S. TIPPLE

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



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HURSLEY CHURCHYARD

SOME FAMOUS COUNTRY PARISHES

BY

EZRA S. TIPPLE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
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TO HER

WHOSE BRIGHTNESS SHORTENS EVERY JOURNEY,

WHOSE ENTHUSIASM GLORIFIES EVERY SCENE,

WHOSE COMRADESHIP MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD BEAUTIFUL,

THE LADY OF MY PILGRIMAGE,

E. W. T.

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INTRODUCTION

There is new interest everywhere in the country parish and the country church. In recent years the modern city, with its amazing growth, its appalling religious destitution, its multitudinous needs, and its dire menace, has largely engaged the attention of Christian workers. Now, however, with almost startling suddenness, Christian people are awakening to the fact that there are problems of the country also quite as immediate, as threatening, and as imperious. There are problems of a declining population, of lack of workers, of poor financial methods and inadequate resources, of the maintenance of too many churches in dwindling communities, of buildings unfitted for modern forms of church work, of scandalously underpaid ministers, and many other problems which have sprung out of the changed conditions of country life and the readjustment of the times. This book, however, is not a study of present-day country parishes nor an attempt to solve the many and varied problems of rural churches. In it may be found, though, here and there, a hint, perhaps, that now, as in

former days, the mastering of perplexing situations and the successful cultivation of meager and barren fields, even unto much fruitfulness, is a matter of personality, and that in America, as in England, the opportunity of the country church and the country pastor, in part at least, is the opportunity of cultivating reverence, of encouraging simplicity of worship, of developing a deep and restful type of piety, of keeping alive in the hearts of men a sense of the sublimity and beauty of God's world, and of sending forth from country parsonages and country homes, as in other days, sons and daughters of sturdy faith and royal purpose to "where cross the crowded ways of life," there to dominate, to inspire, and to bless.

The illustrations in the book, it scarcely need be said, I presume, are of the churches and parishes as they now appear and not as in the days of which I write.

The reproduction of the manuscript sermon of John Fletcher is through the courtesy of my friend, the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, D.D., Pastor of the Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, New York.

E. S. T.

Drew Theological Seminary,
Madison, New Jersey, October 2, 1911.

SOME FAMOUS COUNTRY PARISHES

HURSLEY

It was Saint Swithin's Day, and Saint Swithin is the patron saint of Winchester. It had dawned clear, to the inexpressible joy of all England, for that fair island, "set in silver," had had only rain and cold all the spring and summer. The weather had been the one theme of conversation, and whatever was said was in the form of expletives and invectives. And now Saint Swithin's Day is at hand, what if it should rain this day?

"Saint Swithin's Day, gif ye do rain, for forty days it will remain;
Saint Swithin's Day, an ye be fair, for forty days 'twill rain nae mair."

"Let's go to Winchester," said the Lady, as she looked out of the window of a London hotel. "I do believe it is going to be a pleasant day!"

"Agreed, provided you will go with me to Hursley," and the bargain was made, and we set out. What a day it was! Rural England never seemed lovelier, as we rode the sixty and more miles to the cathedral city of Hampshire,

some twelve miles northeast of Southampton, beautifully situated in a rich valley, which is watered by the famed Itchin River, along whose banks in the later years of his life sauntered Izaak Walton, the high priest among English men of letters of the religion of recreation.

The historical interest of Winchester and of its cathedral can scarcely be exaggerated. It is a city of great antiquity, having had an existence before the Roman invasion even. The Saxons took possession of it in 495. It was the capital of the Saxon kingdom of Wessex, and was converted to Christianity by Birinus, the apostle of the west of England, in 635, and later was the seat of government of Alfred the Great, Canute the Dane, and William the Conqueror. Here in this royal city was crowned Egbert in 827, as was also Edward the Confessor in 1042. And here, it is said, Emma, the mother of the latter, "underwent without hurt the terrible ordeal of walking, blindfold and barefoot, over nine red-hot plowshares, placed at unequal distances." Henry III was born here and frequently held his court here; Henry IV was married here; and here Henry VIII, of more or less questionable memory, entertained Charles V for a week in

1522. After the Norman Conquest Winchester rivaled London even in commercial importance, but soon lost its preëminence.

It has had, however, large importance always as a cathedral city. The see of Winchester is of very great antiquity, and the cathedral of great beauty and dignity. It stands in an open space near the center of the stately city, keeping solemn guard over it. That it is full of interest goes without saying—all English cathedrals are. It may not have the romantic charm of Canterbury, or the exquisite grace of Salisbury, but, as the Lady, who was seeing it for the first time, said, as she stood looking down the nave created by the architectural genius of Wykeham, "It is beautiful, isn't it?" Just at this moment one of the vergers, who was conducting a party of English schoolboys, came near, and we heard him recite his more than twicetold tale: "This cathedral, young gentlemen, is the longest in England, five hundred and sixty feet, and, indeed, in all Europe, except Saint Peter's, Rome; it was built in 1079, and incorporates every style of English architecture from the Norman to the Perpendicular; it contains memorials of Bishop Wilberforce and Izaak Walton, and in six richly colored wooden mortuary chests are preserved the bones

of Ethelwolf, Egbert, Canute, William Rufus, and other kings."

"Come," said the Lady, "that sounds too much like Baedeker," and we turned away to stand once more by the grave of Jane Austen, which is almost opposite the tomb of the founder of the cathedral, William of Wykeham. A large black slab of marble marks the spot, and elsewhere are other memorials, a brass tablet on the wall not far from her resting place, and a beautiful window, inserted in 1900 by public subscription. The quaint house in which she spent her last days is still standing in College Street, not far away, and attracts almost as many pilgrims to Winchester as the cathedral. "It looks just like her," said the Lady—who has always been enthusiastic over the novels of Jane Austen—as she stood gazing at the bow window overlooking the narrow street, and into the drawing room, where slowly ebbed away the life of the gentle woman, whose gifts Sir Walter Scott—after he had read for the second time her "Pride and Prejudice"—praised with such admirable fervor, and who added so appreciably by her work to the literary fame of Winchester, not inconsiderable, by any means, before her time, for it must not be forgotten that Winchester does lay early

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

claim to great literary distinction; no less than this, in fact, that "Alfred created English literature," and that he created it right here in this cathedral city. It may well be, as Dean Kitchin says it is, "a source of legitimate pride for Winchester that within her walls Alfred made that first and greatest history book of the English people."

If here at Winchester a good king made a "history book," not far away, in an almost obscure village, a good man, who lived many years after Alfred, made history. Five miles to the southwest, and nearer the sea, is the village of Hursley, for thirty years the country parish of John Keble, the author of "The Christian Year," and one of the saintliest of men. It is situated on the turnpike road leading from Winchester to Romsey, and at about equal distance from each. The whole region for many square miles "is justly regarded as one of the most favored in England. The varied character of its scenery, with its noble chalk downs, its extensive seaboard, its verdant and peaceful valleys, its vast stretches of moor and forest land, cannot fail to charm the lover of nature." The soil seems specially adapted for the growth of trees, and everywhere are trees, and such trees! In the early days the entire district was

probably either forest ground or downs, and when the king rode out from Winchester he "was able to ride over down, heather, and wood, scarcely meeting an inclosure the whole way from Winchester."

Not far distant is the New Forest, "with the possible exception of the river Thames, England's most beautiful national possession, and the most prized." This wonderful forest is not "new." It must have been more than sixty years ago that Captain Marryat wrote "The Children of the New Forest," and the forest was then nearly eight centuries old, having been seized in 1079—the year Winchester Cathedral was begun—by that royal oppressor, William the Conqueror, who loved the chase and was without conscience, and who made it a game preserve, where he might hunt and kill to his heart's delight. In those days this forest was "the best hated thing in Europe," being regarded as "a monument of Norman oppression and English slavery." The name of the king was covered with odium, and disasters came upon members of his family which were regarded as judgments of Jehovah upon his wickedness, and when he died it was written of him:

"See the man who spacious regions gave,
And wastes of beasts—himself denied a grave."

But that was long ago. The forest is no longer a "hated thing." Its woods and heaths—some ninety thousand acres—are beautiful beyond words, always beautiful, whether in April, when the thorn is in the leaf and the primrose in flower; or in July, when in the gardens the roses riot on walls and trellises, and the slopes of the hills are covered with yellow gorse or are beginning to purple with heather; or in October, when the vast stretches of landscape glow with myriad tints of color more wonderful than the walls of old-world picture galleries.

Within this vast forest are numerous churches, which were undoubtedly the centers of the earliest settlements in this world of trees, such as Minstead Church, once noted because of the number of gypsy children baptized in it; Boldre Church, the rector of which for thirty years was the celebrated William Gilpin, the author of the "Life of Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North," and "Forest Scenery," a book worthy to rank with White's "Selborne"; and the Beaulieu Parish Church, which stands amid the ruins of Beaulieu Abbey, grand and imposing even in their decay, as is also Tintern Abbey, which is not far away and with which Wordsworth was so enraptured. Then there is Romsey Abbey, outside the New Forest,

but on the way to Hursley—or are we approaching Keble's parish from Winchester? But that was another time. This time we are coming by way of Romsey, and it is another rarely beautiful July day, even more beautiful than Saint Swithin's Day of the previous year, and, almost before we realize it, we are in the little village of Hursley.

It really isn't much of a village—just a short street with houses on either side like many of the small hamlets in England. When Keble settled here, in 1836, he came to a widely scattered parish and to a church which, like Winchester, had a history dating back to about the same period. But the early history of this old church need not concern us now. It is the Hursley parish of a later day in which we are interested at this moment, the new era of which really began with the accession of Sir William Heathcote, who came into possession of Hursley Hall on the death of his uncle, in 1825, and with the coming of John Keble as curate of Hursley Church the following year.

John Keble was born April 25, 1792, at Fairford, in Gloucestershire. His father was a country clergyman, who taught his son so efficiently that before the boy was fifteen he had gained a scholarship at Corpus Christi,

ON THE ROMSEY ROAD

ROMSEY ABBEY

Oxford, and four years later became a Fellow of Oriel College. While in Oxford he formed a choice circle of friends, among them John Taylor Coleridge, a nephew of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was ever his loyal friend and wise adviser, and his chief biographer; John Tucker, the missionary, and Thomas Arnold, "who differed from Keble in almost every point, and yet wound himself very closely around his heart." Brilliant indeed was that Oxford career! He won many prizes, and was regarded by professors and churchmen as "the first man in Oxford." But neither his successes nor the adulation of his friends poisoned the fountain of his heart, and he remained simple, unaffected, and genuinely humble always. The spirit with which he entered upon his ministry is beautifully evident in the request which he made of his friend Coleridge as the time drew near for his ordination: "Pray for me; pray earnestly, my dear, my best friend, that He would give me his grace, that I may not be altogether unworthy of the sacred office on which I am, rashly I fear, even now entering; but that some souls hereafter may have cause to bless me. Pray that I may be free from vanity, from envy, from discontent, from impure imaginations; that I may not grow weary,

nor wander in heart from God's service; that I may not be judging others uncharitably, nor vainly dreaming how they will judge me, at the very moment that I seem most religiously and most charitably employed. Without any foolish affectation of modesty I can truly say that the nearer the time approaches, the more strongly I feel my own unfitness and unworthiness for the ministry; yet as I hope it is not such, but that it may be removed in time by earnest and constant use of the means of grace, I do not think it needful to defer my ordination, but I want all the help I can get in the awful and difficult preparation; do not, therefore, forget me in your prayers." Whoever goes to his God-given task with such humility of heart, and with such a high and solemn regard for his calling in Christ Jesus, will not draw back from any field, town or country.

Keble's first parish was Southrop, in which were two other small villages. Here he remained three years, happy in his work. It was while here that he wrote a friend: "I get fonder and fonder of the country and of poetry and of such things every year of my life." Happy the man who, like Froebel, loves birds and flowers and trees and children and God! In this first parish Keble's salary was but five hundred dollars

a year, but he had other priceless compensations, in the "tranquil fields and winding roads," in the responsiveness of the people to his gracious ministries of comfort and instruction, and in their gratitude, often crudely expressed, but always sincere, and in the affection and devotion of several young men, who had followed him when he left Oriel College to be with him as pupils in his new parish. What Keble did for this brilliant group of eager students, Robert Wilberforce, Isaac Williams, and Hurrell Froude, cannot be estimated. "The moral and spiritual influence which he wielded over them was enormous." It was his life, quite as much as what he said, which molded the characters and created the ideals of his pupils. Dean Church, the historian of the Oxford Movement, shows in his account of Isaac Williams how strong this influence was. "He had before him in John Keble a spectacle which was absolutely new to him. Ambitious as a rising and successful scholar at college, he saw a man looked up to and wondered at by everyone, absolutely without pride and ambition. He saw the most distinguished academic of his day, to whom every prospect was open, retiring from Oxford in the height of his fame to busy himself with a few hundreds of Gloucestershire

peasants in a miserable curacy. He saw this man caring for and respecting the ignorant and poor as much as others respected the great and learned. He saw this man, who had made what the world would call so great a sacrifice, apparently unconscious that he had made any sacrifice at all, gay, unceremonious, bright, full of play as a boy, ready with his pupils for any exercise, mental or muscular—for a hard ride, or a crabbed bit of Æschylus, or a logic fence with disputatious and paradoxical undergraduates, giving and taking on even ground. These pupils saw one, the breadth of whose religion none could doubt, 'always endeavoring to do them good, as it were, unknown to themselves and in secret, and ever avoiding that his kindness should be felt and acknowledged'; showing in the whole course of daily life the purity of Christian love, and taking the utmost pains to make no profession or show of it." Nor was that which they did for him inconsiderable either. The law of spiritual return holds everywhere. Keble received as well as gave. There are other fruits of a Christian minister's toil besides money.

Keble had been at Hursley as curate but a few months when the death of his sister changed his plans, and he returned to Fairford to care

TINTERN ABBEY

BEAULIEU ABBEY

for his father, where he remained as his assistant until his father's death, after which, Hursley being again offered to him, he entered upon his lifelong work there in 1836. Keble was always a country minister. Was he content? He certainly knew little from experience of any other kind of a parish. When he went to Oxford it was from a country parish; when he left Oxford it was to minister in a country parish. One of his biographers thinks that one of his poems, written in 1825, holds "a confession of the stirrings of ambition"—

> "My willful heart would burst away
> From where the holy shadow lay,
> Where heaven my lot had cast"—

but when once the choice was made his devotion was fixed and entire. Preferment was never offered him, except early in his career, when the archdeaconry of Barbados was tendered him and was declined, but this in no wise troubled him. "To fulfill his own idea of work upon his flock at Hursley was sincerely all he desired, and he never felt as if he had come up to his own standard."

In a way he was already famous when he came to Hursley. Three years previous he had preached at Oxford the Assize sermon on "National Apostasy," which John Henry New-

man, in his "Apologia," says he always considered the beginning of the famous Oxford Movement of 1833. Moreover, as early as 1819 he had begun to write the poems which were to make up "The Christian Year," and with which his name will be forever associated, and shortly thereafter he had determined to make this collection which would illustrate the Church Year with its various Sundays and Holy Days. "The Christian Year" was published in 1827, and was an immediate success. Newman wrote: "Keble's hymns seem quite exquisite." Arnold thought that nothing equal to them existed in the language. Hurrell Froude was more critical, and expressed his fear that people might take the author for a Methodist! The volume had an enormous sale. In twenty years, more than forty editions were called for, and throughout his life the sale of the book continued unabated. The influence of the book in Keble's day or since, how can it be computed? So far as the Oxford Movement is concerned, it was *the* book of the century. Isaac Williams said, "Thy book I love because thyself art there." Twenty-four years after Keble's death an old parishioner said, "Father and I do read 'The Christian Year' every Sunday, and it do bring him out to us more than we knew even when

he was alive." Keble's mission, as disclosed in this book, was "to illustrate the soothing tendency of the Prayer-book," and to make more glorious the Church of England. "As chivalry was to Sir Walter Scott, so was the Church of England to Mr. Keble, or rather far more, for she was his mother, a real life and being, to whom he gave his loyal allegiance under, of course, her Head, and all the more because 'round her towers he walked in jealous fear,' and looked on her as a decaying church, little knowing that he was really sounding the first prelude to the notes that were to awaken her children to energy and devotion."

Some of the poems of this collection which are best loved are that beautiful evening hymn:

> "Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
> It is not night if thou be near,"

which is usually sung to the tune so fittingly called "Hursley"; "Blest are the pure in heart," "There is a Book," and the poem for the Fourth Sunday in Lent, a few stanzas of which I must give:

> "When Nature tries her finest touch,
> Weaving her vernal wreath,
> Mark ye, how close she veils her round,
> Not to be trac'd by sight or sound,
> Nor soil'd by ruder breath?

"Who ever saw the earliest rose
First open her sweet breast?
Or, when the summer sun goes down,
The first soft star in evening's crown
Light up her gleaming crest?

"Fondly we seek the dawning bloom
On features wan and fair,—
The gazing eye no change can trace,
But look away a little space,
Then turn, and, lo! 'tis there.

"But there's a sweeter flower than e'er
Blush'd on the rosy spray—
A brighter star, a richer bloom
Than e'er did western heaven illume
At close of summer day.

" 'Tis Love, the last best gift of Heaven;
Love, gentle, holy, pure;
But tenderer than a dove's soft eye,
The searching sun, the open sky,
She never could endure."

But there are many others quite as helpfully devotional. "The Christian Year" is not read perhaps as widely as while Keble lived or in the period immediately following his death, when in nine months seven editions were printed and more than eleven thousand copies sold, but it still has "power to soothe," which was and is its greatest charm. "If poems can be found to enliven in dejection, and to comfort in anxiety, to cool the over-sanguine, to

MINSTEAD CHURCH

A GLADE IN THE NEW FOREST

refresh the weary, and to awe the worldly, to instill resignation into the impatient, and calmness into the impatient and agitated—they are these." And Keble had written these before he came to Hursley.

This parish of Hursley was, it seems, very intimately connected with an important period of English history, a fact which interested Keble, and which attracts the immediate attention of all pilgrims to the parish church. "Have you seen the monument of Richard Cromwell?" the vicar asked us, after he had shown us the tablet to the memory of John Keble, adding, "That is quite the most important thing here." I recalled that I had seen in the list of rectors and vicars of Hursley Church, which Charlotte M. Yonge, the well-known authoress of a generation ago, who wrote "The Heir of Redclyffe," and numerous other books for young and old, gives in her account of "John Keble's Parishes" a break in the names between the years 1645 and 1660, which this ardent Church of England partisan bridges with the almost contemptuous explanation in brackets, "Several Puritan Intruders," but I had forgotten for the moment the more important connection which English Puritanism had with this parish.

Richard Cromwell was Oliver Cromwell's eldest surviving son at the time when that mighty captain had defeated the king's armies and brought about the execution of the king. Some three weeks after the king's execution the Protector wrote, under date of February 12, 1648, to Richard Maijor, Esq., a sturdy Protestant living at Merdon, in Hursley parish, reopening negotiations which had been begun the year previous looking to a marriage between his son Richard and Mr. Maijor's elder daughter Dorothy. The letter was direct and plain:

"Sir—I received some intimations formerly, and by the last return from Southampton a Letter from Mr. Robinson, concerning the reviving of the last year's notion, touching upon my Son and your Daughter. Mr. Robinson was also pleased to send enclosed in his a Letter from you, bearing the date the 5th of this instant, February, wherein I find your willingness to entertain any good means for the compleating of that business. From whence I take encouragement to send my Son to wait upon you; and by him to let you know that my desires are, if Providence so dispose, very full and free to the thing,—if upon an interview, there prove also a freedom in the young per-

sons thereunto. What liberty you will give herein, I wholly submit to you. I thought fit, in my letter to Mr. Robinson, to mention somewhat of expedition; because I know not how soon I may be called into the field, or other occasions may remove me from hence; having for the present some liberty of stay in London. The Lord direct all to his glory. I rest, Sir, your very humble servant,

"Oliver Cromwell."

This letter, which was well received, was almost immediately followed by the young Richard himself, twenty-one years of age, of comely appearance and easy manner, who, accompanied by a friend of his father, visited Hursley, and was received by the family "with many civilities." On his return home the accounts which he gave must have been encouragingly satisfactory, for the soldier-father dispatched a note of thanks to Mr. Maijor for "the reception of my son, in the liberty given him to wait on your worthy daughter, the report of whose virtues and godliness has so great place in my heart that I think fit not to neglect anything on my part which may consummate a close of the business if God please to dispose the young ones' hearts thereunto, and other suitable ordering of affairs

toward mutual satisfaction appear in the dispensation of providence." Much correspondence followed concerning "settlements," with considerable haggling, it is said, but at last all matters having been satisfactorily arranged, the marriage took place at Hursley on May Day, 1649, a short time before Cromwell set out "to crush the ill-arranged risings in Ireland." The young people lived with the bride's father in the lodge at Hursley, where Mrs. Cromwell visited them, and where they continued to reside until the death of the Protector, in September, 1658, when Richard was accepted by Parliament and the army as his father's successor. He was quite a different type of man, however, and gave much offense by his manner of speech and behavior. Without genius for kindling enthusiasm, without taste or special qualification for war or statecraft, this "phantom king of half a year" must have felt immeasurable relief when the "Rump" Parliament requested him to resign, and he was privileged to return to Hursley, "where he found himself pursued by those debts of his father which the Long Parliament had engaged to pay, and which swallowed up more than his patrimony, though the manor of Merdon, having been settled upon his wife, could not be

HURSLEY VILLAGE STREET

KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

touched." After many vicissitudes, in part due to political causes, after many sorrows, some of them brought upon him by his own children, he died, in 1712, in his eighty-sixth year, and was buried at Hursley. As Miss Yonge says, these words written by Palgrave are more graceful than the inscription on the monument erected to him by his two undutiful daughters, and they are indeed:

> "Him count we wise,
> Him also, though the chorus of the throng
> Be silent, though no pillar rise
> In slavish adulation of the strong,
> But here, from blame of tongues and fame aloof,
> 'Neath a low chancel roof,
>
> "The peace of God
> He sleeps; unconscious hero! Lowly grave
> By village footsteps daily trod;
> Unconscious! or while silence holds the nave,
> And the bold robin comes, when day is dim,
> And pipes his heedless hymn."

The beautiful lime trees which surround the churchyard, and, faithful guardians of their holy trust, keep ceaseless watch above the sleeping dead, are said to have been planted by Richard Cromwell, and are a worthier monument to his memory than the large tablet of marble of Doric architecture, surmounted by death's heads, and bearing his name, which

now fills a conspicuous place in the church directly opposite that of the Heathcote family. It has not always been so placed, for, like the one whom it commemorates, it was "exiled" for a time. The vicar told us that originally the monument had been in the chancel, a fitting place for it, it would seem, but that when the new church was built Sir William Heathcote, master of Hursley Park, "who hadn't any use for the Puritans," to use the words of the vicar, caused the monument to be removed and put in the sub-cellar, or some other equally obscure place in the rectory, where it remained out of sight of the worshipers and of the many strangers who visited the church, and of the great-hearted but opinionated baronet, until one day he fell seriously ill, and, his conscience pricking him concerning his treatment of the Cromwell monument, he gave hurried orders to have it restored to the church.

There are many Cromwell traditions which are told to this day by the villagers, one of them being to the effect that Oliver hid his treasure in an iron chest, which was dropped to the bottom of Merdon Well. The story runs that when an attempt should be made to recover this chest it could be successful only provided silence was maintained

while it was being drawn up. Its recovery was one day essayed, when, as it neared the top of the well, an excited workman unthinkingly cried out, "Here it comes," and down to the lowest depths the priceless treasure sank, never to be seen again.

"But we did not come to Hursley to do homage to the Cromwell family," said the Lady, as the vicar continued his recital of Cromwellian traditions; "it is the Hursley of Keble that we are most interested in, and as people always will be." (There are more than two thousand visitors to this little country church every year, and few of them know anything about it, except that John Keble ministered at its altar.)

"Would you like to see the vicarage?" said the friendly vicar, taking the hint. Think of asking such a question of two people who had lived in a parsonage and knew its beautiful joys! The vicarage is not far from the church, just beyond the churchyard, and separated from it by a low wall. To this attractive house Keble, on accepting the living at Hursley, brought his young bride, and with her established an ideal home, which was always the center of the parish life, quite as much so, if not more, as the spacious Hursley Hall, the

palatial house of his patron, Sir William Heathcote. What a radiantly happy home this parsonage-house was for thirty years! Mrs. Keble was a beautiful woman, gifted, refined, gentle, winsome, and in fullest sympathy with her preacher-husband's ideals and methods of parish work. "My conscience, my memory, and my common sense," was Keble's description of her. No children were born into the home, and so a whole world of affection was lavished on the boys and girls of the parish. The teaching in the parish school took on new life from their coming to Hursley, one who was associated with them testifies, and Keble was notoriously painstaking with his confirmation classes, giving instruction month after month, through long periods, and having the young people come often to the vicarage for direction and for counsel. How wondrously gentle he was with children! One of his biographers says that it was "the passion for purity" in his own life which accounts for his exquisite tenderness toward children. It may have been, but the Lady thinks it was just love for them.

How great his concern for children was, how complete his devotion to them through all the years of his Hursley ministry, is best shown in his "Lyra Innocentium, Thoughts in Verse, on

HURSLEY CHURCH FROM THE ROAD

HURSLEY VICARAGE AND CHURCH

Christian Children, Their Ways and Their Privileges," which he wrote, arranged, and published in the early years at Hursley. It is a volume somewhat after the fashion of "The Christian Year," having a poem appropriate for each Sunday and Holy Day. Miss Yonge says that many of the poems are full of Hursley atmosphere or events connected with the life of the author. " 'Christmas Eve Vespers' was suggested by the schoolmaster's little daughter going into church before the decorations had been put up, and exclaiming, disappointed, 'No Christmas!' 'The Second Sunday in Lent' recalls, in the line 'on the mimic rain on poplar leaves,' the sounds made by a trembling aspen, whose leaves quivered all through the summer evenings, growing close to the house of Mr. Keble's lifelong friend and biographer, Sir John Taylor Coleridge, at Ottery Saint Mary. An engraving of Raphael's last picture, 'The Transfiguration,' hung in the vicarage drawing-room.

" 'The Fourth Sunday in Lent,' on the offering of the lad with the five loaves, was suggested by the stained window on that subject given by the young Marquis of Lothian—a pupil for some years of Mr. Wilson at Ampfield—to the church at Jedburgh, built by his

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mother. The eldest son of Dr. Moberly, when a child staying at the vicarage, was unconsciously the cause of the poems 'Loneliness' and 'Repeating the Creed' for Easter Sunday and Low Sunday. Frightened by unwonted solitude at bedtime, he asked to hear 'something true,' and was happy when Mrs. Keble produced the Bible. He was a boy of beautiful countenance, and his reverent, thoughtful look, as he repeated the Creed, delighted Mr. Keble. It was little expected then that he was doomed to a lifelong struggle with invalidism, though he was able to effect much as a thinker and a priest, before he, too, was taken to see in paradise 'the glorious dream around him burst.'

"It was a baby sister of his who drew herself up in her nurse's arms with a pretty gesture, like a pheasant's neck in a sort of reproof, as she said 'Thank you' to her little self, when she had held out a flower to Mr. Keble, which for once in his life he did not notice; and his self-reproach produced the thought of thankfulness. One of the gems of the 'Lyra,' 'Bereavement,' was the thought that came to the mind of the pastor as he buried the little sister, the only child except the elder girl, of the bailiff at Dr. Moberly's farm. 'Fire' embodied his feeling about a burnt child at Ampfield—

'We miss thee from thy place at school
And on thy homeward way,
Where violets, by the shady pool,
Peep out so shyly gay.'

The lullaby with the view of the burnished cross upon the spire, and the girl singing the baby to sleep with the old psalm—

'In Thee I put my steadfast trust.
Defend me, Lord, for thou art just'—

is another Ampfield scene, inspiring noble and gentle thoughts for Innocents' Day.

" 'Lifting up to the Cross' was the product of a drawing brought home from Germany of a sight beheld by Miss Maria Trench, on a journey with Sir William and Lady Heathcote. She afterward became Mrs. Robert F. Wilson, and made her first wedded home at Ampfield; and there is another commemoration of that journey in the fountain under the bank in Ampfield churchyard, an imitation of one observed in Tyrol, and with the motto:

"While cooling waters here you drink
Rest not your thoughts below,
Look to the sacred sign and think
Whence living waters flow,
Then fearlessly advance by night or day;
The holy Cross stands guardian of your way."

" 'More Stars' and 'Wakefulness' are reminiscences of Charles Coleridge Pode, a little

nephew of Mr. Yonge, and his ecstatic joy on the first night of being out of doors late enough to see the glory of the stars."

If one would form a judgment of Keble as a poet he must read, not only Keble's Oxford lectures on poetry and "The Christian Year," but he must also read and reread this book of verses for children, where are to be found some of his poems of greatest beauty and poetic fancy. Moreover, he must bring to a study of Keble's poetry somewhat of the love for God's world and for children which the Hursley minister felt.

Keble always loved the country, its freshness and openness, its power to renew and to inspire. He had a reverence for it as he had a reverence for truth, God being the Maker of one and the Source of the other. Dr. Liddon called him the wisest man he had ever known, and Miss Yonge said that she had never been to him to ask his advice without getting an answer different from what she expected, and one which showed that he had looked the matter round on all sides. He was always eager for knowledge, and nature to him was one of life's most valued teachers. His writings disclose both his affection for nature and the use which he made of her hints and other teachings. The opening poem of "The Christian Year" is as follows:

HURSLEY CHURCH PORCH

INTERIOR HURSLEY CHURCH

"Hues of the rich unfolding morn,
That, ere the glorious sun be born,
By some soft touch invisible
Around his path are taught to swell;—

"Thou rustling breeze so fresh and gay,
That dancest forth at opening day,
And brushing by with joyous wing,
Wakenest each little leaf to sing;—

"Ye fragrant clouds of dewy steam,
By which deep grove and tangled stream
Pay, for soft rains in season given,
Their tribute to the genial heaven."

No man who was not sensitive to the manifold beauties of God's world, or who did not love tree and cloud and the radiant glory of the sky, could have written such words as these. His poems abound with metaphors and comparisons suggested by the many pages "of nature's beauteous book." "The march of some majestic cloud," "the desert road," "the sparkling rill," "the birds that cower with folded wing," "the distant landscape," "the horizon's silent line," "heaven's star-sprinkled floor," "the bitter pool,"

"See the soft green willow springing
Where the waters gently pass,
Every way her free arms flinging,
O'er the moist and reedy grass,"

"the lark mounting with glistening wing," "the

billowy corn," "the first soft star in evening's crown," and a thousand other like expressions, may be taken from his "Christian Year" and other poems. Perhaps nowhere did he express more beautifully his own joy of living and his love of nature than in his poem for the first Sunday after Epiphany:

"Lessons sweet of spring returning,
Welcome to the thoughtful heart!
May I call ye sense or learning,
Instinct pure, or Heav'n-taught art?
Be your title what it may,
Sweet the lengthening April day,
While with you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

"Soft as Memnon's harp at morning,
To the inward ear devout,
Touch'd by light, with heavenly warning
Your transporting chords ring out.
Every leaf in every nook,
Every wave in every brook,
Chanting with a solemn voice,
Minds us of our better choice.

"Needs no show of mountain hoary,
Winding shore or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory
Teaches truth to wandering men:
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die,—
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse."

Keble's parish work was incessant. He, of course, like every true shepherd, knew every member of the parish. He "was the personal minister to each individual of his flock." Whatever had to be done he did. He watched over homes, as one who must give account. He visited the sick and the aged. He made frequent journeys to the workhouse to cheer its inmates, he taught in the parish school, he catechised the children in the church, he held the hand of the dying, he comforted the sorrowing, he warned the impenitent. He was fearless, speaking frankly to those in the parish whose conduct seemed unworthy, and oftentimes even stern and severe when he had to deal with cases of scandal. One who was then a child recalls the flashing eye and stern satisfaction of his voice as he read out that a certain murderer, who had escaped, had been caught and would be hanged. He added to the number of churches in his parish. Two miles away was a small hamlet, which was increasing in population, and there, at Ampfield, he built a church. He found the church at Hursley in poor condition, and unadapted for worship according to his ideas, and, feeling that the poor rural community which he was serving could not meet the expense of rebuilding, he met the

cost himself, some thirty thousand dollars, providing for this large expenditure from the receipts from the sale of "The Christian Year." The Hursley Church is John Keble's monument!

The sign board at the first turn to the left after leaving Hursley reads: "To Otterbourne," a village some five miles distant, and this was a part of the Hursley Parish. Here lived one of Mr. Keble's most helpful families, the Yonges, devoted friends, and who coöperated with him in all the enterprises of the parish. The memory of the gifted daughter of this home, Charlotte M. Yonge, will ever be closely associated with the Hursley Parish. The new school for boys, built in connection with the Otterbourne Church, in 1837, was in part paid for with the proceeds from the sale of her first book, "The Château de Melville." From the income derived from her other books she gave liberally to the work of the parish, and, moreover, was lavish of her time and strength. Mr. Keble's constant efforts to beautify the services of the sanctuary, to enrich the forms and deepen the spirit of worship, to inspire larger reverence for the church and its sacraments, to encourage and foster the growth of piety, and to write the statutes and commandments of the religion of Jesus Christ upon the

OXFORD: ORIEL COLLEGE

OXFORD: EXETER GARDENS

hearts of the often indifferent people of the parish,—all had her fullest sympathy and co-operation. And to his helpful friendship she bears abundant and grateful testimony. She died in 1901, in the seventy-eighth year of her age, and her grave in the Otterbourne churchyard is just by the monument to the memory of her pastor and friend.

When Newman was asked to describe Keble he replied, "How shall I profess to paint a man who will not sit for his portrait?" It *is* difficult to portray a man so sensitive, so self-effacing, so beautifully spiritual as John Keble was. In appearance he was slender, about medium height, with sloping shoulders, which made him look short until he drew himself up. His head was "one of the most beautifully formed heads in the world"—the face not beautiful, except when lighted with a smile, a broad forehead, clear, brilliant, penetrating eyes of dark brown, with what Southey called "a pendulous motion," lighting up quickly with merriment, or kindling into fire in a moment of indignation. A painter, who made two portraits of him, said that Keble "had one of the most remarkable faces he had ever seen, *for one who had eyes to see.*" It is told that he was shy and awkward with strangers, had moods

of morbid melancholy, and, according to one who knew him, sometimes quickly lost his temper. He was fearless yet shrinking, strong yet tender—he frequently came away in tears from the sickbed of a parishioner. He was a defender of the poor—"I will not have my poor fellows laughed at," he protested, when some one called them "clodhoppers." He was a man of conspicuous gifts, a scholar, a poet, a writer of eminent ability, a preacher, and everywhere, in the pages of his books, in the delivery of his sermons, and in his home and parish life, there is seen, glowing like a fixed star, his simple, childlike humility. It is one of the most Christlike of traits in a preacher and most powerful. As Keble himself says in one of his poems:

> "To gentlest touches sweetest notes reply.
> Still humbleness with her low-breathed voice
> Can steal o'er man's proud heart, and win his choice
> From earth to heaven, with mightier witchery
> Than eloquence or wisdom e'er could own."

Some one who visited him went away and wrote: "I never saw anyone who came up so completely to my ideas of a religious man as Keble, and yet I never saw anyone who made so little display of it (I use this word for want of a better at present); he seems to me a union

of Hooker and George Herbert—the humility of the one with the feeling and love of the other. In short, altogether he is a man whom the more you see of and know, the less you must think of yourself."

Keble's love for the Church of England was a passion. He was jealous of her innocence, her good name, her purity, her freedom. With the Oxford, or Tractarian Movement, which was an honest attempt to recall the church to a truer sense of its responsibilities, and to re-establish the church, its sacraments and ordinances, in its rightful place in the life of individuals and of the nation, Keble's name will be forever associated,—one of the "triumvirs who became a national force and gave its real character to the Oxford Movement," James Anthony Froude thought, the others being Pusey and John Henry Newman.

Between Keble and Richard Hurrell Froude, a brother of the historian, who was early cut off, but who while he lived was one of the most active of the Oxford group, there was what the biographer of the latter calls "an exquisite friendship." It was his influence which brought together Keble and Newman, and he later wrote to Newman, "Do keep writing to Keble and stirring his rage. He is my fire, and I may

be his poker." They loved one another with a great affection. Keble, the Sunday after Froude's death, which must have been his own first Sunday at Hursley as vicar, broke down completely, and for some moments could not proceed. Newman's principles as the active leader of the Oxford Movement were undoubtedly imbibed from his intercourse with Froude and Keble, and in his "Apologia," as I have said before, he refers to Keble as "the true and primary author of it." This great movement within the Church of England was at its height when Keble came to Hursley, for it he was largely responsible, and although he could not, as did Newman, forsake the church of his birth and of his love, and enter the Church of Rome, it colored his thought and his work. Naturally buoyant, of high spirits, full of play, "the greatest boy of them all," the gardener at Southrop said, a lover of fun, when that conception of the church, to make which a reality he devoted his whole life, laid hold of him, all his natural inclinations were subordinated to a deep seriousness which disclosed itself thereafter in many ways. Hurrell Froude was one day discussing Law's "Serious Call," a book which influenced Keble deeply, as it had influenced men like John Wesley and

FOUNTAIN AT AMPFIELD

AMPFIELD CHURCH

Samuel Johnson at an earlier period, and made concerning it what seemed to his mentor a careless remark. Later Keble said to him, "Froude, you thought Law's 'Serious Call' was a *clever book;* it seemed to me as if you had said that the Day of Judgment was a pretty sight." The Oxford Movement largely determined his career, but it did not make him, as was fondly hoped by some of its leading spirits, "a second Ambrose."

Keble was a country minister, and as a preacher his biographers think he will be best known as a *parish* preacher. His sermons were what a bishop of the Church of England said sermons should be—"pious instructions to lead men to heaven, and save them from hell." Pusey thought that their chief characteristics were affectionate simplicity and intense reality, the first-named characteristic being the result of a deliberate purpose. "They said to me," Keble told a friend, "that I was preaching over the people's heads, and so I changed my style." That was early in his ministry at Hursley. He always spoke extemporaneously; his illustrations were drawn from the scenes and details of village life. He was direct, winsome, and intense, even dramatic sometimes. "He spoke of good angels," said a hearer,

"their loving ministry, and their presence in church briefly, but in words so simple and real that it seemed as if the rustling of their wings were close around."

This country minister, this poet-preacher, died March 29, 1866, and was buried in the Hursley churchyard, not far from the entrance to the church which is his memorial. The day he was laid to rest it was decided by some of the friends who stood about his grave that the worthiest monument which could be erected to perpetuate his memory and influence would be the building of a college at Oxford, and ten years later Canon Liddon preached at the opening of the Chapel of Keble College from the text, "The new man which is renewed unto knowledge, after the image of him that created him." And in the sermon the great preacher of Saint Paul's Cathedral said this true word:

"It is not high station, or commanding wealth, or great public exploits, or wide popularity of opinions, which will explain the foundation of this college—raised as it is to the memory of a quiet country clergyman, with a very moderate income, who sedulously avoided public distinctions, and held tenaciously to an unpopular school all his life. Keble College is a witness to the homage which goodness carried

INTERIOR CHAPEL KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

GRAVES OF JOHN KEBLE AND HIS WIFE

into the world of thought, or, indeed, into any other sphere of activity, extorts from all of us, when we are fairly placed face to face with it; it is a proof that neither station, nor wealth, nor conspicuousness, nor popularity is the truest and ultimate test of greatness. True greatness is to be recognized in character; and in a place like this character is largely, if not chiefly, shaped by the degree in which moral qualities are brought to bear upon the activities of mind. The more men really know of him who, being dead, has, in virtue of the rich gifts of grace with which God had endowed him, summoned this college into being, the less will they marvel at such a tribute to his profound and enduring influence."

Six weeks after Keble's death his devoted wife was carried to her resting place in the churchyard by his side. As we walked from the double grave down the path to the lich-gate the dear Lady of my pilgrimage said, "It seems as if we were going away from friends"; then, after a moment of reverent silence, she added, "But we have other friends at Bemerton," and we entered our conveyance and rode away past Ampfield Church, through Romsey, over Salisbury Plain to Salisbury, and beyond to the country parish of good George Herbert.

BEMERTON

Bemerton has long been a shrine. When Emerson was in England in 1847, he went with Carlyle on an excursion to Stonehenge, which neither had seen. Their route took them through Hampshire, a county in which Carlyle was accustomed to spend part of every summer and his familiarity with which, Emerson records, "made the way short." There must have been much delightful converse as they passed through the county, one of the most highly favored in all England, and full of literary associations. They must have talked of Izaak Walton, who himself said that "Hampshire exceeds all England"; of Jane Austen, of whom Lord Macaulay could speak with admiration, and who was placed by Tennyson next to Shakespeare—at least if Carlyle were in good humor that day; of Thomas Ken, who wrote the *Te Deum* of universal Christianity, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow"; of Young, the poet of the "Night Thoughts"; of William Gilpin and Gilbert White; and of the long line of distinguished men before the Norman conquest, who were

among the most famous makers of English history. They leave the train at Salisbury, go to Stonehenge, and the following day to Wilton Hall, where "the magnificent lawn on which grew the finest cedars in all England," much impressed Emerson; they then returned by coach to Salisbury, stopping en route at Bemerton.

In 1880, Lecky, the historian, who had been visiting at Farringford, Lord Tennyson's home, went with the poet to visit the same points of interest. They found the garden at Wilton "a perfect dream of beauty." And there they long sat and talked. Of what they talked, it is easy to conjecture, for Wilton Hall, the far-famed seat of the Earls of Pembroke, and most intimately connected with the life of George Herbert, is among the most notable of English manor halls. History, poetry, and romance, have all united to give it renown. Eleven centuries ago a Saxon earl, wounded in battle and lying at the point of death, founded a chantry here. Thirty years later King Egbert, at the request of his sister Alburga, converted the church into a religious house for women, the princess herself becoming the first prioress. When Alfred had become king, and war had desolated the land, and this priory

had been destroyed, Alfred founded in its stead a monastery, choosing for its site the spot where his palace formerly had stood. In the reign of Henry VIII, the dissolution of the monastery seems to have been effected with the absence of the violent proceedings which were necessary in other places. An old historian relates that the house gave no trouble whatever and quietly surrendered on the 25th day of March, 1539. The monastery, its inmates having departed, its ecclesiastical fittings having been removed, was shortly after the dissolution leveled to the ground, and its site, together with its territorial possessions, granted by the king to Sir William Herbert. Here, on this site of the ancient church of Saint Edith, toward the close of the reign of Henry VIII, a stately mansion made from plans prepared by the celebrated painter Hans Holbein, and built under his direction, arose. In July, 1551, Edward VI, then in his fifteenth year, who had but recently recovered from an attack of the measles and smallpox, started on a royal journey through some of the western counties, accompanied, so the diary which he kept reads, "by an imposing cavalcade of four thousand horsemen," and in due course arrived at Wilton for a visit.

BEMERTON

With the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, a period of unusual splendor and romantic interest begins for the lordly house of Wilton. Here the youth of Philip Massinger was spent. Here Sir Philip Sidney, the idol of his time, "the darling of the court and of the camp," after a quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, and a mild rebuke by the queen for not paying due respect to his superiors, a rebuke which his haughty spirit could not endure, withdrew from the court to the seat of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke, where, to while away his leisure hours, he wrote that remarkable book which was never completed, and which, unfinished, was given to the world after his death, "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," commonly known as Sidney's "Arcadia," a book all the fashion in England at the time George Herbert was born, only seven years after the death of the author.

Here at Wilton the incomparable Shakespeare walked and talked and acted, as we shall see. And hither Spenser was brought by his friend Sidney, and it is more than likely that some of the picturesque descriptions of landscape scenery in the "Faerie Queene" were suggested to Spenser by the natural objects which he saw in Wilton Park.

The visit of Queen Elizabeth to Wilton Hall, in the course of one of her numerous royal tours, produced a pageant unapproached in the illustrious annals of the House of Pembroke. There is a graphic description of the visit and its brilliant festivities, written by a member of the royal party, which the Lady, who has just read it, wants me to give; the quaint account begins thus: "The Queenes Majesty returning from Bristowe on her Progresse Anno XVI. of her Majestyes Raigne, the 3rd day of September, being Friday, her Highnesse was receaved by the same Earle," etc.,—but I tell her it is quite too long, delightfully interesting as it is, for a place here. And besides, anyone who is interested can find a like picture in Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth." I must, however, share with my readers the concluding statement: "during all which tyme her Majesty was here, she was boeth merry and pleasant." But, then, Elizabeth usually had a pretty good "tyme."

Sir Philip Sidney came to Wilton often. His only surviving sister had married Lord Herbert, the oldest son of the then Earl of Pembroke, in 1576; she was a woman whose virtues have been commemorated by Jonson, Spenser, and other less well-known poets, and

Sir Philip was devoted to her. Among the descriptive passages in the "Arcadia" the reader who is familiar with the park and the pleasure grounds at Wilton, which Tennyson rapturously called "paradisaical," will have no difficulty in recognizing the accuracy of the following landscape drawing, evidently sketched on the spot: "There were hilles which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble vallies, whose base estate seemed comforted with refreshing of silver rivers; medowes, enameld with all sortes of ey-pleasing floures; thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so, too, by the cherefull disposition of many well-tuned birds; ech pasture stored with sheepe feeding with sober securitie, while the pretie lambes with bleating oratorie craued the dams comfort; here a shepheard's boy piping, as though he neuer should be old; there a young shepherdesse knitting, and withall singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to worke, and her hands kept time to her voice's musick."

It was here that James I witnessed the first theatrical representation which he had seen in England. So great was the king's delight with the play that at the close he inquired if the author of it was among the players,

and his host replying in the affirmative, was directed to introduce him to the monarch, in order that he might receive in person the royal commendation of his play. The play was the comedy of "Twelfth Night," and the dramatist who knelt before the king for his approval was William Shakespeare.

It was from such surroundings, from such an atmosphere, from such a circle of friends and relatives that George Herbert went to be a country parson in the little parish of Bemerton, in 1630. The Earl of Pembroke it was who made the request of Charles I, a guest at Wilton Hall at the time, that he would bestow the living of Bemerton upon his kinsman, and when the king indicated his willingness to grant the request, George Herbert came to Wilton Hall to receive the favor in person from the king.

Did Wordsworth when he wrote in "The Excursion" his idyllic description of a country pastor among the mountains have Herbert in mind? It is not improbable.

"The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning's solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academic bowers. He loved the spot-

WILTON HALL

BEMERTON CHURCH: WEST FRONT

Who does not love his native soil?—he prized
The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppressed
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishment as well beseems
His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
And one a turreted manorial hall
Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors
Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his own judicious pains,
The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice; statelier than could else
Have been bestowed, through course of common chance,
On an unwealthy mountain Benefice."

It must be already apparent that the Bemerton pastor belonged to a family of distinction. His father, Sir Richard Herbert, owned two estates, one of them Montgomery Castle in North Wales, where, April 3, 1593, George Herbert was born. The Herberts of Montgomery were a race of soldiers, tall, handsome, noted for courage rather than intellect, who quarreled easily and lived roughly. His brothers, most of them, were lovers of war. Some of them died in battle. But George Herbert seems not to have been strong enough for the hardships of the march and the "fiery field," and it was this fact of his ill health,

he thought, which drew him to the scholar's life, but more probably was it the influence of his mother, who, in an age of remarkable women, was an accomplished musician, a lover of literature, a woman of beauty and social charm.

Herbert's father having died when George was but four years old, his education devolved largely upon his mother, who went to Oxford that he might study there, and later moved to London, where the boy entered Westminster School, of which at the time Lancelot Andrewes, one of the greatest preachers of the day, was dean. In 1609 Herbert won a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge. Five years later, he became a Fellow of his college and instructor in rhetoric, and began the systematic study of divinity. In 1619, the oratorship of Cambridge University having become vacant, Herbert eagerly sought to secure the place, and obtaining it, held it for eight years. The orations and official letters of this period, which Professor Palmer calls "his period of hesitation," when dreams of political eminence swayed him, subordinating while not altogether destroying his plan to become a minister, show him to have been a skillful courtier and little more. So well, indeed, did

he do this work of laudation that he attracted the notice of the king, who henceforth regarded him as "the jewel of that university," and whenever the king went to hunt at Royston near Cambridge, he was usually accompanied by the university's official maker of sweet phrases and pretty sentences.

Here, at Cambridge, he made other influential friends also. He came to know Herrick, the poet and divine, who enjoys a better reputation as a poet than as a divine, dying in his Devonshire parish, a lone man, sick and tired of the convivial life which he had spent in London; Milton, who came to Cambridge as a student in 1624, three years before Herbert left; Cromwell and Jeremy Taylor, who were both born at Cambridge in 1613; Sir Henry Wotton, the successful diplomat, and Nicholas Ferrer, the scholar-merchant who gave up public life for religious seclusion. More important than these even, though, were such powerful friends as the Duke of Lenox, the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Hamilton, who became his patron, and Lord Bacon, whom he met in 1620, the beginning of a helpful, stimulating friendship which continued with increasing closeness until Bacon's death. Dr. John Donne, too, the brilliant Dean of Saint

Paul's Cathedral, London, the fascinating conversationalist and unusual preacher and poet, became his firm friend. He had long been the friend of Herbert's mother; addressed to her his lines on "Autumnal Beauty," beginning,

> "Nor spring nor summer beauty hath such grace
> As I have seen in one autumnal face,"

and his sonnet "Saint Mary Magdalene," and at her funeral preached one of his greatest sermons.

But in the political life of England no one of these had larger influence than Herbert's great kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke. When, therefore, George Herbert indicated his ambition to enter political life, the earl actively favored it, and would undoubtedly have succeeded in placing him in some foreign court, had not the strong will of Herbert's mother prevented his abandoning his thought of the ministry; and when, in 1627, she died, Herbert, now thirty-four years of age. resigned the oratorship and gave himself to the work for which that faithful mother had long felt he was pre-eminently fitted. His decision, however, did not approve itself to many of his aristocratic friends. It passed understanding how a gentleman of noble lineage, a courtier, and a social

favorite could choose the ministry, especially in a century when the morals of the clergy were so low that the saintly Bishop Andrewes used to ask the people on his visitation rounds: "Doth your minister resort to any taverns or ale houses? . . . Doth he use any base or servile labour, drinking, riot, dice, cards, tables, or any unlawful games? Is he contentious, a hunter, hawker, swearer, dancer, usurer?" and when the office was generally held in contempt. One of these friends to whom he confided his purpose of entering into holy orders urged him not to do so, on the ground that it was too mean an employment, but Herbert replied: "It hath been formerly adjudged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest families on earth; and though the iniquity of the late times have made Clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of Priest contemptible, yet I will labor to make it honorable by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities, to advance the glory of that God that gave them; knowing that I can never do too much for him that hath done so much for me as to make me a Christian. And I will labor to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the

merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus." And he did both. From that day to this he has been known as "holy Mr. Herbert," and beyond any man of his day he succeeded in making the profession "honorable" in the eyes of men.

It was three years after his decision that Bemerton, which is on the high road between Wilton and Salisbury, about three miles from the former, and a mile and a half from the latter, was offered him. Three hundred years have worked striking changes. Then Bemerton was open country, now it is practically a suburb of Salisbury. When Herbert used to make his regular twice-a-week visit to that city, it was a walk of perhaps half an hour across smiling fields, through which the Nadder flows with many a graceful curve, but we covered the distance in less than ten minutes—considerable less I have some reason to suspect—in the automobile which had brought us from Hursley across Salisbury Plain. When we asked a small boy by the roadside to direct us to the Bemerton church, he pointed across the fields, and leaving the car, over the fields we went, only to find ourselves looking upon the present parish church, with the shadow of a giant elm upon it. But the little ivy-covered

THE NEW BEMERTON CHURCH

BISHOP'S PALACE, SALISBURY

church of Saint Andrew, which Herbert found in decay, and almost immediately restored, is only a short distance off, and we soon stood by its altar, and above Herbert's grave.

The chapel is a diminutive structure, only eighteen feet wide by forty-six long, with seats for about fifty people. Though many changes have been made in the little building since Herbert's day, it is much the same now as when he became rector of the parish, and when during the ceremony of induction, shut up in the church alone to toll the bell, as required by a curious law on such an occasion, he remained so long that his friends, growing anxious, looked in at the window, and saw him prostrate on the ground before the altar, engaged, as he afterward told them, in framing rules for his life as a parish priest. How faithfully he kept these rules we shall see.

It was in 1630, the year following his marriage to Jane Danvers after a courtship of three days, that he entered upon his duties at Bemerton. The third day thereafter, when he had changed his sword and silk clothes for a canonical coat, he returned to Bainton, where his wife was, and greeted her thus: "You are now a minister's wife, and must now as far forget your father's house as not to

claim a precedence of any of your parishioners; for you are to know, that a priest's wife can challenge no precedence or place, but that which she purchaseth by her obliging humility; and I am sure places so purchased do best become them. And let me tell you, that I am so good a herald, as to assure you that this is truth." And not even the saintly Herbert was more devoted to the people of the parish than was "Mistress Jane." She was the almoner of his charities, his constant counselor, and consistently sympathetic with his aims.

The rectory, like the church, was much out of repair. The bishop, when he inducted him, had reminded him that it was to the "more pleasant than healthful parsonage of Bemerton." The house, which is almost a part of the church, being separated from it only by the narrow road, has been doubled in size since Herbert built it, but there remains enough of the old building to enable one to recall it as it was when the country parson and his wife, with their three nieces, lived in it those three fruitful years, the most significant of Herbert's all too short life.

The servant who answers our summons and admits us almost mechanically leads us directly into the old study, or "writing closet," as

Herbert styled it, which, like the living room across the hall from it, is practically unchanged after all the years. "Just there he wrote many of his poems," said our suave attendant, as he pointed to a small desk between the old-fashioned windows, which open on the street, and from which one can almost touch the porch of the church, so near it is. It was there then that he must have written that "Inscription to My Successor" which he caused to be engraved on the mantel of the chimney in the hall, and which we had paused long enough to read before stepping across the threshold into the study:

"If thou chance for to find
A new House to thy mind,
And built without thy cost,
Be good to the Poor,
As God gives thee store,
And then my Labour's not lost."

In this tiny room he composed the best of his verse. He had written little, in fact, before coming to Bemerton, and had published none whatsoever. In the three years of his life here, he wrote more than half of his poems, and his immortal "Country Parson" besides. Among his Bemerton poems were those entitled "Avarice," "Justice," "Giddinesse," "Vanitie," "Constan-

cie," and that highly praised bit of verse called "Vertue":

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie,
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;
For thou must die.

"Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die

"Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses.
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

"Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives."

The most extended poem of the Bemerton years was that on "Providence," which was based on Psalm 104. 24, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." Throughout the entire long poem he had in mind this beautiful psalm, which, in the King James Version, a version which just at that time was attracting much attention and was being widely used, having appeared in 1611, is entitled "An exhortation to bless the Lord for his mighty power and providence,"

his purpose being to give, as its closing stanzas show, "a kind of climax and epitome of all his thought." Some of the figures of speech and the illustrations of these, and other of the Bemerton productions were undoubtedly suggested to him by the quiet rural scenery of the parish, and especially that through which he passed in his walks between the retired parsonage and the ancient cathedral city. "Every foot of the mile and more of nearly level high-road, with its bordering fields, flowers, and hedges, must have become intimately known to him; as his own slender figure, in its dark clerical habit and white bands, could not fail to grow familiar to all who lived or went by the way."

The story of Herbert's devotion to the people of the Bemerton parish, as told by Walton, is one of the most charming pictures in literary biography. His parish was his chief care. The clergymen of his age were, as has been said, scandalously indifferent to the needs of their flocks. But Herbert entered upon the incumbency of Bemerton determined to rescue the office from reproach. No man ever took his mission more seriously. His ideal of the preacher, which he sought to attain unto, he discloses in his poem, "The Windows,"

the theme doubtless being suggested by the windows of the cathedral, where there are said to be as many windows as days of the year. The teaching of the poem is that the preacher's heavenly doctrine must shine through his own life before it can influence those who would see God, now as then a true teaching:

"Lord, how can man preach thy eternall word?
He is a brittle crazie glasse;
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford
This glorious and transcendent place,
To be a window, through thy grace.

"But when thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie,
Making thy life to shine within
The holy Preachers, then the light and glorie
More rev'rend grows, and more doth win;
Which else shows watrish, bleak, and thin.

"Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and aw; but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the eare, not conscience, ring."

Herbert assuredly realized in some measure his own high ideal. Walton is undoubtedly extravagant. His biography is poetic and charming, and by no means searching or judicial, but there must have been some ground for his fervid rhetoric, as when he writes: "I have now brought him to the parsonage of Bemerton,

BEMERTON RECTORY

BEMERTON CHURCH

and to the thirty-sixth year of his age, and must stop here, and bespeak the reader to prepare for an almost incredible story, of the great sanctity of the short remainder of his holy life; a life so full of charity, humility, and all Christian virtues, that it deserves the eloquence of Saint Chrysostom to commend and declare it; a life that, if it were related by a pen like his, there would then be no need for this age to look back into times past for the examples of primitive piety, for they might be all found in the life of George Herbert." He was unquestionably a saintly man, "certainly one of the most perfect characters which the Anglican Church has nourished," says a modern critic, who has never been found guilty of having too much sentiment. He was devoutly religious, and religiously devout. Whenever he made mention of the name of Jesus Christ, even in ordinary conversation, he would add, "My Master." So profound was his affection for the Word of God that he was "heard to make solemn protestation that he would not part with one leaf thereof for the whole world, if it were offered him in exchange." When a friend sought to comfort him on his death-bed by recalling his part in the restoration of some church, as being an especially good work,

he replied, "It is a good work, if it be sprinkled with the bloud of Christ." It was in this spirit of devotion to his Lord, of fervent belief in his redemptive work, and of confidence in his Word that Herbert ministered to the small group of two or three hundred souls "in a village remote from city, court and university." It was his daily habit of worship to appear with his entire household in the little chapel across the road from the parsonage "strictly at the canonical hours of ten and four, and then and there he lifted up pure and charitable hands to God in the midst of the congregation." Many of his parishioners joined in these daily prayers, and others who could not attend, "stayed their ploughs when the bells rung to prayers."

Like every minister of God Herbert had numerous parish experiences, which almost better than anything else disclose the spirit in which he did his pastoral work. Walton relates several, one or two of which I give largely as Walton describes them: "In a walk to Salisbury, he saw a poor man with a poorer horse, that was fallen under his load; they were both in distress and needed present help; which Mr. Herbert perceiving, put off his canonical coat and helped the poor man to

unload and after to load to his horse. The poor man blessed him for it, and he blessed the poor man; and was so like the good Samaritan, that he gave him money to refresh both himself and his horse; and told him, 'That if he loved himself, he should be merciful to the beast.' Thus he left the poor man; and at his coming to his musical friends at Salisbury, they began to wonder that Mr. George Herbert, that used to be so trim and clean, come into that company so soiled and discomposed; but he told them the occasion. And when one of the company told him, 'He had disparaged himself by so dirty an employment,' his answer was, 'that the thought of what he had done would prove music to him at midnight; and that the omission of it would have upbraided and made discord in his conscience, whensoever he should pass by that place; for if I be bound to pray for all that be in distress, I am sure that I am bound, so far as it is in my power, to practise what I pray for. And though I do not wish for the like occasion every day, yet let me tell you, I would not willingly pass one day of my life without comforting a sad soul, or showing mercy; and I praise God for this occasion. And now let us tune our instruments.' "

He also gives another incident, which illustrates Herbert's purpose to be the friend of the poorest of his flock. There appeared at the parsonage one day an old woman who came "with an intent to acquaint him with her necessitous condition, as also with some troubles of her mind: but after she had spoke some few words to him, she was surprised with a fear, and that begot shortness of breath, so that her spirits and speech failed her." But she was quickly reassured by the great-hearted parson, who "told her, 'he would be acquainted with her, and take her into his care.' And having with patience heard and understood her wants (and it is some relief for a poor body to be heard with patience), he, like a Christian clergyman, comforted her by his meek behaviour and counsel: but because that cost him nothing, he relieved her with money too, and so sent her home with a cheerful heart, praising God and praying for him." Thus this village parson, with his disciplined mind, broadly cultured—he could speak French, Italian, and Spanish, and wrote numerous poems in Greek or Latin—well acquainted with the sciences, with a passion for strong friendships, fastidious, proud, an aristocrat all his days, yet genuinely humble and sympathetic,

labored in the country parish which had been committed to his care, with a cheerful zeal and a self-effacing devotedness which won for it and for him an immortality of fame.

Bemerton has blessed the world with two gifts, both of measureless value, one a "pattern of 'reverent discipline and religious fear' with 'soft obedience' and quiet labor; the other the pattern of the true spiritual shepherd in the midst of his flock, preaching, teaching and exhorting to righteousness." Both these have been curiously fashioned into two books which Herbert made when not ministering unto the necessities of his people, or reading prayers or preaching in the chapel:—

> "This aisle George Herbert paced, and in this choir
> With fervent music charged his pen,
> And quaintly wrought his lines of pleading fire
> Excusing unto God the ways of men."

One of these "The Temple," appeared in 1631. Its success was instantaneous; its influence has continued to this day. The title of it indicates the author's purpose. Herbert loved the church. Puritan influences were at work, but he was not moved by them, save to accord the sermon a larger place in the service of worship. In the Leighton Bromswold Church, one of the churches of his parish, the reading

desk and pulpit were of equal height, and in lines which are well known he seems to give the precedence to prayer, as he undoubtedly did always:

"Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
Praying's the end of preaching. O, be drest;
Stay not for th' other pin! Why, thou hast lost
A joy for it worth worlds. Thus Hell doth jest
Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee;
Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee."

But in the Bemerton Church he had the pulpit raised to the same height as the reading desk, in order that the people might value the sermon equally with the prayers. This, however, was but a slight concession to the bellicose Puritanism of the age. Yet it should be said that his contention that the individual soul may come into immediate personal communion with God, and his insistence upon personal responsibility are also Puritan. Nevertheless he was a High Churchman, ardently devoted to the Church of England, even hostile to her foes, almost as insistent as John Keble on an elaborate ritual, writing with the same passionate ardor as the author of "The Christian Year."

"I joy, deare Mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments, and hue
Both sweet and bright."

SAINT JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

INTERIOR OLD BEMERTON CHURCH

"The Temple" is the tribute of a devoted son to his spiritual Mother. No book in the English language is fuller of devotion to the Church of England than this, and it is averred that no poem of our literature exhibits more of the spirit of true Christianity. The book is made up of a series of poems on the various parts of the church building and its services of worship and teachings, beginning with "The Church Porch." The concluding lines of the first stanza—

> "A verse may finde him, who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice"—

reveal the poet's intention. He is starting out to preach, and makes no attempt to conceal it. The poems of "The Temple" are as didactic and hortatory as much of Longfellow's verse. Herbert is always the preacher, and of "The Temple" he seeks to make "a plain man's guide to holiness." How he preached can perhaps best be seen in one of the best known of his poems, "The Pulley," by which Herbert meant God's means of drawing us to him:

> "When God at first made man,
> Having a glasse of blessings standing by,
> Let us (said he) poure on him all we can;
> Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,
> Contract into a span.

"So strength first made a way,
Then beautie flow'd, then wisdome, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottome lay.

"For if I should, said he,
Bestow this jewell also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tosse him to my breast."

Between Herbert's death, in 1633, and 1709 thirteen editions were published, a second edition being called for the first year. In 1670 Walton estimated that twenty thousand copies had been sold. Then came a century of neglect, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Coleridge, who much admired Herbert as a poet, holding that quaint as are some of Herbert's conceits his poems "are for the most part exquisite in their kind," called attention to him, with the result that Herbert again came into his own.

Herbert may have been a minor poet, as he has been classed, but he was by no means a second-rate parson. His life at Bemerton

was an illustration of the gospel he preached, and a commentary on his own works, for it is the testimony of Walton, that "he did never turn his face from any that he saw in need, but would relieve them, especially his poor neighbors, to the meanest of whose houses he would go, and inform himself of their wants, and relieve them cheerfully, if they were in distress, and would always praise God, as much for being willing, as for being able to do it." But better than this testimony of Walton, is the picture of himself, which Herbert so faithfully portrays in "The Country Parson," a book as truly autobiographical as Newman's "Apologia." "I have resolved to set down the form and character of a true Pastor," writes the author to his readers, "that I may have a Mark to aim at." This admirable book, which will add to the value of any library, no matter how complete otherwise, appeared in 1652, nearly twenty years after Herbert's death, with the double title "The Priest to the Temple, or The Countrey Parson, His Character and Rule of Life." The first, however, has been tacitly dropped, Herbert undoubtedly having given only the latter part, "The Countrey Parson," with which words, printed in capitals, he opens thirty-four of the thirty-seven chapters. The

importance which he attaches to this title is abundantly evidenced. While throughout the book he uses "priest," "pastor," and "minister" interchangeably, no one of them has the prominence or significance of "the countrey parson." The book has "a certain double aim." Primarily it was a study of the conditions in which this country parson found himself, written as a guide in his own work, but at the same time intended as a help to others. It was a record both of his aspirations and of his experiences, and its practical value was extraordinary. The ministry of Herbert's day, and especially the country ministry, was not taken seriously, neither was it held in high esteem. Herbert undertook, as I have said, to restore it to some worthy place in the thought and life of England. It is more than probable that "he himself became a country minister that he might show how it could become a field fit for intelligent, energetic, stately, and holy living. Every feature of the country minister's life is studied. Nothing is counted trivial." It is really a wonderful little treatise on pastoral theology, neither ephemeral in its teachings, nor local in their application. A few books only merit an immortality of fame and use. Herbert's "Country Parson" is such a

book. No modern book of pastoral theology is richer in the wisdom of good sense or more prolific in helpful suggestions. The opening sentence, "A pastor is the deputy of Christ for the reducing of man to the obedience of God," is the keynote of the book, but every page yields ripe, wholesome fruit.

"The Countrey Parson is exceeding exact in his Life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his wayes."

"The Countrey Parson is very circumspect in avoiding all coveteousnesse, neither being greedy to get, nor nigardly to keep, nor troubled to lose any worldly wealth; but in all his words and actions slightly and disestimating it, even to a wondering that the world should so much value wealth."

"The Countrey Parson preacheth constantly; the pulpit is his joy and his throne. The character of his Sermon is Holiness. He is not witty, or learned, or eloquent but Holy."

"The Countrey Parson when any of his cure is sick, or afflicted with losse of friend, or estate, or any ways distressed, fails not to afford his best comforts, and rather goes to them than sends for the afflicted, though they can and otherwise ought to come to him."

"The Countrey Parson is a Lover of old

Customs, if they be good and harmlesse; and the rather, because Countrey people are much addicted to them, so that to favour them therein is to win their hearts, and to oppose them therein is to deject them."

"The Countrey Parson's yea is yea, and nay, nay: and his apparel plain, but reverend and clean, without spots, or dust, or smell; the purity of the mind breaking out, and dilating itself even to his body, clothes, and habitation."

"The Countrey Parson is full of all knowledge" and "condescends even to the knowledge of tillage and pasturage . . . because people by what they understand are best led to what they understand not."

A wise parson was shrewd George Herbert. The most advanced specialist of "the country problem" could hardly desire more helpful assistance than he gives in his "The Country Parson," or conceive a more valuable contribution to the literature of the subject than this book.

No man of his century, or any century indeed, has been more frequently quoted by writers on the pastoral office, or by other writers. Here is Lowell saying to his friend Loring: "In the fine old poet Herbert are as good arguments—the more pleasing for their

GEORGE HERBERT'S GARDEN

"A SILVER STREAM SHALL ROLL HIS WATERS NEAR"

quaintness—for church-going as are to be found anywhere." And here is Holmes remarking concerning something that Emerson wrote that it is not any the worse for being the flowering out of a poetical bud of George Herbert's. The fact is Emerson, like George Macdonald, who ranked him far above all the company of religious singers, was very fond of Herbert, as may be judged by the praise which he bestowed on him, when he wrote, "Herbert is the psalmist dear to all who love religious poetry, with exquisite refinement of thought. Surely, so much piety was never wedded to so much wit." The best known teachers of pastoral theology have spoken, one might infer from reading their lectures, with a volume of George Herbert in their hands. Here is one who tells his students how "Even modest George Herbert when he began to preach, thought it necessary to awe the people by preaching to them a prodigiously learned sermon, in which he showed them that he was equal to the best as a 'Latiner'; but in his pious simplicity he informed them that he should not generally preach to them so learnedly as that, but henceforth he should try to save their souls." Another exhorts his hearers to emulate Herbert, who said on the day of his

induction to Bemerton, "I will be sure to live well, because the virtuous life of a clergyman is the most powerful eloquence to persuade all that see it to reverence and love, and at least to desire to live like him." Open almost any book and the familiar name will greet your eye: "The favorite saying of holy George Herbert, as he prepared to sing to his viol, 'religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates and sets rules about it' "; or "The good minister must not only gather in, feed, and guide, but he must also guard. So George Herbert—himself a noble example of this virtue —says 'The parson, wherever he is, keeps God's watch.' " Now it is a line, "George Herbert said, 'Nothing is small in God's service.' " And now a homely bit of poetic counsel:

"By all means use sometimes to be alone.
Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.
Dare to look in thy chest, for 'tis thine own,
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
Who cannot rest till he good fellows finde,
He breaks up house, turns out of doores his minde."

And now it is some phrase, which has become a proverb, like "Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stockings," or "All equal are within the Church's gate," or "Who lives by rule keeps good company." Somehow that Bemerton poet-pastor

very often struck a note which, when you have heard it, like the song of some strange bird, haunts you.

"May we go into the garden?" the Lady asked after we had made the round of the rectory, and with some trepidation I noted, for we had early been told that the rector was out there among his flowers. "I think perhaps I can venture to take you into it just a minute, though we are not supposed to admit visitors when the parson is there," said the shrewd lad who was butler to the household and guide to strangers. His audacity was duly rewarded as it should have been, and as he probably expected it would be! He opened a door, and lo! we were in George Herbert's garden. Dear old George Herbert's garden. It seemed indeed like holy ground. There is an inexpressible charm in every old garden, but here—! Cowley, who, like Pope, wrote poems in early boyhood, publishing a volume when he was thirteen, which was the year after Herbert came to Bemerton, a volume he must have read as he walked here in his quiet retreat, makes Diocletian say to the ambassadors who were enticing him to a throne:

> " 'If I, my friends,' said he, 'should to you show
> All the delights which in these gardens glow:

'Tis likelier much that you should with me stay,
Than 'tis that you should carry me away'!"

It need not be said that George Herbert loved this garden. A modern English parson who has written delightfully concerning the flowers and shrubs and vines in the midst of which he dwells, says in one of his essays: "There is no love so great, save that of woman, as a man's love for his garden. Its charm is ever fresh when the sun shines brightly, or even in the depth of winter, for then it is the time for discussing possibilities, and the gardener is planning, waiting, and preparing for the advent of spring and the joys of summer. It may not be a very elaborate garden, with orchid houses and vineries and conservatories galore; but it is just the little bit of God's earth that is left to the tending of one man and his partner in life, a Paradise as beautiful as Eden, if no serpents of evil come and mar its beauty."

It takes little imagination to see that tall, erect, thin man, with a benignant face, and a gracious courtly air, humble withal, walking along the banks of the Nadder, as it flows silently away to join the Wiltshire and Hampshire Avon, one of the numerous less famous Avons of England. A good friend of mine, who also is a lover of gardens, and who visited

BEMERTON GARDEN: SUMMER HOUSE

THE COUNTRY PARSON IN HIS GARDEN
From the painting by W. Dyce, R.A.

BEMERTON

Bemerton just before we made our second pilgrimage there, wrote me in a dream of ecstasy: "Isn't it just the most charming garden ever, with that rich velvety lawn, and those laughing flower beds, all shut in from the world, and the little river at the foot of the garden slipping by on its way to the spire of Salisbury. Think of having a private river all your own!"

It almost seems as if Cowley must have had this garden in mind when he wrote

> "Here let me, careless and unthoughtful lying,
> Hear the soft winds above me flying,
> With all their wanton boughs dispute,
> And the more tuneful birds to both replying,
> Nor be myself, too, mute.
>
> "A silver stream shall roll his waters near,
> Gilt with the sunbeams here and there,
> On whose enamelled bank I'll walk,
> And see how prettily they smile,
> And hear how prettily they talk."

"I spent a delightful day yesterday," wrote Charles Kingsley to his wife one summer morn in 1844. "Conceive my pleasure at finding myself in Bemerton, George Herbert's parish, and seeing his house and church, and fishing in the very meadows where he, and Dr. Donne, and Izaak Walton, may have fished before me. The dazzling chalk-wolds sleeping in the sun, the clear river rushing and boiling down in

one ever sliding sheet of transparent silver, the birds bursting into song, and mating and toying in every hedge row—everything stirred with the gleam of God's eyes, when 'He renew-eth the face of the earth!' I had many happy thoughts." And well he might. Others also have had happy thoughts in that peaceful garden. The day previous to his visit to Bemerton, Kingsley had spent in the Cathedral at Salisbury, and at the day's close wrote: "I have been walking around the Cathedral; oh! such a cathedral! Perfect unity, in extreme multiplicity. The first thing which strikes you in it (spiritually, I mean) is its severe and studied calm, even to a 'primness'—nothing luscious, very little or no variation. Then you begin to feel how *one* it is; how the high slated roof and the double lancet windows, and the ranges of graduating lancet arches filling every gable, and the continued repetition of the same simple forms even in the buttresses and string courses, and corbel tables, and the extreme harsh angular simplicity of the moldings all are developments of one idea. . . . And then from the centre of all this, that glorious spire rises, ending *in the Cross*. . . . Oh! that cathedral is an emblem, unconscious to its builders, of the whole history of Popery from the twelfth

century to the days when Luther preached once more Christ crucified for us—forever above us, yet forever among us! It has one peculiar beauty. It rises sheer out of a smooth and large grassfield, not struggling up among chimneys and party-walls, but with the grass growing to the foot of the plinth. . . . The repose is so wonderful. It awes you, too, without crushing you. You can be cheerful under its shadow, but you could not do a base thing."

No view of this glorious cathedral and its cross-tipped spire is finer than that which one has from the alder-lined banks of the Nadder here in Herbert's garden. There is a story told of Norris, the philosopher—he was the first critic of Locke's "Essay"—poet—his verses are for the most part ordinary and commonplace—and preacher—the last twenty years of his life (he died in 1711) were lived at Bemerton —to the effect that his attention was called by a friend to the rare loveliness of the prospect as they stood side by side one summer evening near the edge of the stream. It seems that the poet's last chance of promotion had vanished with the appointment of Gilbert Burnet, the brilliant historian and controversialist, but extremely unpopular with the clergy (Swift said of him, "He has the misfortune

to be hated by every one who either wears the habit or values the profession of a clergyman"), to be Bishop of Salisbury. "Alas!" said Norris, looking mournfully at the distant cathedral, "it is my only prospect." But what a view across the meadows of that most graceful and symmetrical of English cathedrals! Nowhere can that richly adorned spire, the loftiest in England, which dominates all views of the city, be seen to better advantage than from this Bemerton garden. And to this quiet retreat reaches also the music of the cathedral bells. The sometimes lonely parson found joy and companionship in this. He was a lover of sound. His recreation was music; he played the lute, was fond of the organ, and sang. Professor Palmer has directed attention to the great refinement of Herbert's senses and particularly his susceptibility to odors. "Out of an odor he has constructed one of his daintiest poems. His 'Banquet' is perfumed throughout. In ten other poems fragrances are mentioned." How he must have reveled in the flowers of his garden!

"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth—
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than any where else on earth."

This Bemerton garden is much the same now

THE PRIVATE RIVER OF THE BEMERTON GARDEN

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL ACROSS THE MEADOWS

as it was when Herbert walked amid his flowers, softly singing his own beautiful hymn:

"The God of love my shepherd is,
And he that doth me feed,
While he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want or need?

"He leads me to the tender grasse.
Where I both feed and rest;
Then to the streams that gently passe:
In both I have the best."

A medlar tree which he planted is still standing, though much shattered by storms. The lawn, which slopes down to the river, is tapestried as we cross it, with the shadows of red chestnuts, giant elms, and venerable ash trees, but these walks and grounds have undergone changes since Herbert's day. And even now as we walk in the garden, changes are going on. The rector is at work in a small rock garden over there on the edge of the lawn. His "Mistress Jane" of Herbert's time is with him, and a well-groomed curate is lending his aid also. New plants are being set out. To-morrow there will be new blossoms. What if a thousand blooms shed their fragrance to bless this day, there will be yet more to-morrow! The Garden of the Lord grows more beautiful each passing day. The Kingdom of Heaven comes in all the earth, and the hearts of men are glad.

MADELEY

Among the treasures of my library—and I have among others a number of "association books" which lure me to a favorite shelf now and again—is a copy of Southey's "Life of Wesley," which once belonged to Edward FitzGerald, the poet, bearing his autograph together with many annotations and references. Among the latter are several to "Fletcher of Madeley," which, with various notes and characteristic markings of the account of the life and death of Fletcher, show FitzGerald's interest in this eminent eighteenth-century saint. He indicates his approval of Southey's well-known estimate: "Jean Guillaume de la Flechere was a man of rare talents and rarer virtue. No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister. He was a man of whom Methodism may well be proud, as the most able of its defenders; and whom the Church of England may hold in remembrance as one of the most pious and excellent of her sons"—a remarkable tribute, but not more remarkable than Robert

Hall's: "Fletcher is a seraph who burns with the ardor of divine love. Spurning the fetters of mortality, he almost habitually seems to have anticipated the rapture of the beatific vision"; or than John Wesley's encomium in the sermon which he preached on the death of his friend and coworker in 1785: "Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblamable a character in every respect I have not found either in Europe or America; and I scarce expect to find another such on this side eternity." Now all this sounds like extravagant praise, but modern writers are no less profuse. "If John Wesley was the great leader and organizer," writes a Church of England historian, "Charles Wesley the great poet, and George Whitefield the great preacher of Methodism, the highest type of saintliness which it produced was unquestionably John Fletcher. Never, perhaps, since the rise of Christianity has the mind which was in Christ Jesus been more faithfully copied than it was in the Vicar of Madeley. To say that he was a good Christian is saying too little. He was more than Christian; he was Christ-like!"

This remarkable man, although an English parish priest, was not an Englishman. He was born in Nyon, Switzerland, some fifteen miles from John Calvin's city, Geneva, the cradle of the Reformation. Fletcher never talked much of his ancestry, nor of the fine old baronial hall above Lake Leman, in which his father, at one time an officer in the French army, lived. Shortly after Fletcher's marriage his wife found in his desk a seal. "Is this yours?" she asked, not knowing that the simple country preacher was a descendant of one of the Savoy earldoms. "Yes," replied the good man, "but I have not used it for many years." "Why?" "Because it bears a coronet, nearly such as is the insignia of your English dukes. Were I to use that seal, it might lead to frivolous inquiries about my family, and subject me to the censure of valuing myself on such distinctions." More was it to him that he was a child of God than that the blood of earls flowed in his veins. A rich experience of grace in Christ Jesus, how certainly it will give one a just sense of values!

Fletcher's boyhood was spent in a beautiful home, superbly situated. "The house where I was born," he wrote, "has one of the finest prospects in the world. We have a shady

wood, near the lake, where I can ride in the cool all day, and enjoy the singing of a multitude of birds." Who that has seen that wonderful view of Lake Leman with the Jura Mountains in the distance will ever forget it? At one's feet are vine-covered terraces reaching down to the blue lake

> "with its crystal face,
> The mirror where the stars and mountains view
> The stillness of their aspect in each trace";

there is a boat on the quiet waters, whose "sail is as a noiseless wing"; to the right is the stern city of Geneva, to the left are Lausanne, Clarens, "sweet Clarens, the birthplace of deep Love," and the much-sung Castle of Chillon, and beyond and above are the mountains, and over all an Italian sky! Upon such a scene as this Fletcher looked during his boyhood.

Some, like Samuel, are called early to God's altars. John Fletcher was, but his instinctive timidity turned him from "so great a burden," and he entered the army, or made the attempt, rather. The story of the thwarting of his purpose is classic. Portugal was sending troops to Brazil to defend its interests there, and Fletcher went to Lisbon, where he gathered a company of his own countrymen, accepted a captain's commission, and was waiting for

the ship to sail, when one day the maid who was attending him at breakfast let fall a kettle of water, which so severely scalded the young soldier that before he recovered, the vessel had sailed for Brazil, and, as Wesley observed, "the ship was heard of no more." God seemingly had other plans for him.

Oliver Goldsmith went to Holland once to teach the Dutch English, without himself knowing a word of Dutch. Fletcher, speaking only French, came to England in 1752 for the sole purpose of learning the language, and in an incredibly brief period he had acquired such skill in its use that he obtained a position in a family of influence, living at Tern Hall in Shropshire, the head of which was later to place this Swiss tutor in the parish which was to be the scene of his life work. It was all very strange. God *does* move in a mysterious way!

The England into which Fletcher came to learn English was itself learning something else, being at that time in the very midst of that remarkable evangelical revival which was destined in the providence of God to kindle fresh altar fires all over the land. For nearly twenty years now George Whitefield, as eloquent a preacher as England heard in the

LAKE LEMAN AND THE CASTLE OF CHILLON

A SHROPSHIRE COTTAGE

eighteenth century, had been going about the country, gathering immense crowds, and moving men to repentance; John Wesley had long since entered upon that unparalleled itinerant career which was to take him to every town and hamlet in England; and such other "evangelicals" as Grimshaw, and Romaine, and Rowland, and Hervey were producing really extraordinary effects by their open-air preaching.

There is a story that Fletcher's earliest acquaintance with the Methodists came about in this wise. Indeed, he himself related it to Wesley in the following words: "When Mr. Hill went to London to attend the Parliament he took his family and me with him. On one occasion, while they stopped at Saint Albans, I walked out into the town, and did not return until they were set out for London. A horse being left for me, I rode after them and overtook them in the evening. Mr. Hill asked me why I stayed behind. I said, 'As I was walking I met with a poor old woman, who talked so sweetly of Jesus Christ that I knew not how the time passed away.' Said Mrs. Hill, 'I shall wonder if our tutor doesn't turn Methodist by and by.' 'Methodist?' said I. 'Pray what is that?' She replied, 'Why, the Methodists are a people that do nothing but pray.

They are praying all day and all night.' 'Are they?' said I. 'Then, by the help of God, I will find them out if they be above ground.' I did find them out not long after, and was admitted into the society." Tyerman thinks that the date was surely not later than 1756, and probably a year or two earlier. Be that as it may, Fletcher had at last yielded to his early call to preach, and shortly after received the divine anointing for the work of the ministry. His own account of the solemn event reveals in large measure the secret of his passion for and success in the salvation of souls. "About the time of my entering into the ministry," he says, "I one evening wandered into a wood, musing on the importance of the office I was going to undertake. I then began to pour out my soul in prayer, when such a feeling sense of the justice of God fell upon me, and such a discovery of his displeasure at sin, as absorbed all my powers, and filled my soul with an agony of prayer for poor, lost sinners. I continued there till the dawn of day, and I considered this as designed of God to impress upon me more deeply the manner of those solemn words, 'Therefore knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.'" He was ordained in 1757, receiving deacon's orders from the Bishop of

Hereford, and priest's orders on the following Sunday from the Bishop of Bangor, in the Chapel Royal at Saint James, London. On the day that he was ordained priest he went to Snowfield to assist Wesley in a sacramental service. It was a far cry from that royal chapel to Snowfield! But henceforth Fletcher was to have close relations both with the Church of England and with the Methodist movement, as so many clergymen did in that wonderful spiritual awakening. Fletcher speedily became a great favorite with the Wesleys, and between him and Charles Wesley there grew up a beautiful friendship, which continued until Fletcher's untimely death.

Fletcher's choice of Madeley rather than a much more desirable living was characteristic of the man. The story has been told many times, but it will bear repeating to every generation. He remained with the Hills at Tern Hall, until the two sons of the family had become undergraduates at Cambridge. Meanwhile he had preached as occasion offered, now at Atcham, some five miles from Tern Hall, where the text was so direct, and his sermon so plain, that the rebuked congregation did not soon care to hear him again, and now in a village chapel in another direc-

tion. Now he preaches in French, and now in English. His patron knew his burning desire to preach and one day offered him the living of Dunham. It had never occurred to him that it would not prove an acceptable gift.

"The parish," said he, "is small, the duty light, and the income good—four hundred pounds per annum, and it is situated in a fine, healthy, sporting country." But Fletcher was not looking for this kind of an opening.

"Alas!" he replied, "alas, sir, Dunham will not suit me. There is too much money and too little labor."

"But," said his benefactor, "few clergymen make such objections. Is it not a pity to decline such a living, especially as I know not where I can find you another? Would you like Madeley?"

"That, sir," said the zealous young preacher, "would be the very place for me."

And so the matter was arranged, and Fletcher had no occasion to be dissatisfied either with the amount of the work, or with the size of the income, the former being abundant, and the latter amounting to barely twenty-five pounds per year. Thus, October 17, 1760, John Fletcher became vicar of Madeley, a

relationship which was to continue until his death, twenty-five years later, August 14, 1785.

Madeley is in Shropshire, in the west of England, near Wales, a journey of nearly three days by coach from London. To one who proposed to visit him, Fletcher sent these directions, much as Thackeray might have written to a friend: "If you choose to venture into Shropshire, you may take the Shrewsbury coach at the Swan, in Lad Lane, somewhere in the city, and in two days and a half you will be at Shiffnal, eighteen miles short of Shrewsbury, and three from Madeley. If you send me word when you are to set out, I will send my mare to meet you at the Red Lion, in Shiffnal, the day that the coach passes through the town." And whoever made the journey found a town beautifully situated in a winding glen through which flows the Severn River. The church was not an attractive one —it was long ago demolished and the one now standing built. The parish included Coalbrookdale and Madeley Wood, noted for their coal mines and their iron works. Aside from these, Madeley seems to have been remarkable in Fletcher's day for little else than the ignorance and profaneness of its inhabitants. It was surely a benighted place to which he came,

though the situation there was no worse than elsewhere in England. Appalling indeed were the conditions of rural and urban life in England in the eighteenth century! In Madeley as everywhere the external forms of religion had long been held up to ridicule. The people almost never went to church. The ordinary congregation was discouragingly small, and, what was worse, nobody seemed to care. No modern pastor has been confronted by a more difficult task, or has found more "problems" clamoring for solution. The most of the people were "stupid heathens," many of them were wantonly immoral, even. It was a common thing in that parish, he soon discovered, for young persons of both sexes to meet together for what was called "recreation," which recreation generally continued from evening to morning, and consisted chiefly of dancing, reveling, drunkenness, and obscenity. Immediately, like John the Baptist, he laid the ax at the root of the tree. Time and again he burst in upon them, his eyes aflame, and his indignation breaking all bounds. He made constant war on the saloon and other foes of goodness. Yet he was the gentlest of men, and from the very start of his ministry at Madeley he sought to be a good shepherd.

COALBROOKDALE

OLD COURT HOUSE, MADELEY

He was not content merely to discharge the stated duties of the Sabbath as others before him had been. In return for the "living of Madeley" he gave a life to the people. He sought them out. He went "into their pits and forges." He put on the dress of a miner, and was lowered into the mines where he worked with the men and exhorted them with tears. He visited from house to house six, eight, ten hours a day. Those alarmed sinners who tried to hide from him he pursued to every corner of his parish. When some gave as an excuse for not attending church that they could not awake early enough to get their families ready, taking a bell in hand, he went through the streets and lanes and even to the outlying parts of the parish, starting as early as five in the morning, to summon all the people to the house of God. His pastoral labors were incessant. Early and late, without regard to weather, now on horseback, and now on foot, he went his daily rounds. He ate little, seldom taking any regular meal except when he had company, and when reproved for not allowing himself a sufficiency of necessary food, he replied, "Not allow myself food? Why, our food seldom costs my housekeeper and me less than two shillings

a week!" The emphasis which the "evangelicals" put upon pastoral oversight has been overlooked. It is commonly thought that Methodism was merely a revival, and an awakening it surely was, but the leaders gave unusual attention to the care of converts. The first work of the Holy Club was pastoral in its nature. The members visited the poor, the sick, the prisoner.

Fletcher's appreciation of the value of time was such as any man will have who feels the urgency of the King's business. To some schoolgirls who came on his invitation to the vicarage in the early morning of the day following a visit by him to the school, he gave an impressive lesson. When they were seated in the kitchen he took a basin of milk and some bread and seating himself on an old bench, said as he laid his watch near him, "Girls, yesterday morning I waited on you a full hour, while you were at breakfast. Look at my watch!" He then began to eat, continuing in conversation with them. When he had finished, he asked them how long he had been. "Just a minute and a half, sir," one of them answered. "Now, girls," he replied, "we have fifty-eight minutes of the hour left." And then he began to sing,

"Our life is a dream!
Our time as a stream
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay."

After which he talked with them on the value of time, and the worth of the soul, and prayed with and for them, and gave them his blessing.

Naturally opposition arose, and it was of a sort to test his faith and his patience. His preaching was too direct; his pastoral labors were too personal; the questions which he asked were too troublesome; the course which he marked out was too straight. Soon the parish was in a turmoil. A clergyman living in Madeley, a very proper young man, openly declared war upon him by pasting on his church door a paper in which he charged him with rebellion, schism, and with being a disturber of the public peace. The owners of the public houses raged against him. Some of the leading farmers and most of the respectable tradesmen wanted to turn him out of his living. Others called him a Jesuit, and still others used more obnoxious terms. The opposition grew so violent that Fletcher was sorely tempted to give up his living. He wrote his friend Charles Wesley that he had lost what little reputation he had had. Nevertheless he

continued his labors and added to them. To his Friday night lecture, which was an innovation—and what parish will not resist innovations or changes to the death?—he added the catechizing of children on Sunday afternoon, another startling departure. He opened services at Madeley Wood and Coalbrookdale—more irregularities. Yet soon his preaching and his work began to attract much attention. Not only was his church filled, but scores who could not find room in the church stood in the churchyard, and listened to his impassioned appeals.

There are numerous incidents of Fletcher's early ministry at Madeley which are historic, among them a remarkable occurrence which belongs to the year 1763, barely three years after his coming to Madeley. It attracted unusual attention at the time and has since. Among other modern writers, Stanley in his "Lectures on the Jewish Church" refers to it. On September 29, of that year, the Feast of Saint Michael, to whom the church at Madeley was dedicated, Fletcher preached a sermon which had an amazing outcome. The story of it was afterward published in a small tract entitled "The Furious Butcher Humbled," the substance of which shall be given in the words of the preacher himself. "One Sunday when I

had done reading prayers at Madeley," he relates, "I went up into the pulpit, intending to preach a sermon, which I had prepared for that purpose; but my mind was so confused, that I could not recollect either my text or any part of my sermon. I was afraid I should be obliged to come down without saying anything. But, having recollected myself a little, I thought I would say something on the First Lesson, which was the third chapter of the book of Daniel, containing the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, being cast into the fiery furnace. I found in doing this such extraordinary assistance from God, and such a peculiar enlargement of heart, that I supposed there must be some peculiar cause for it. I therefore desired, if any of the congregation found anything particular, they would acquaint me with it in the ensuing week. In consequence of this the Wednesday after a woman came and gave me the following account: 'I have been for some time much concerned about my soul. I have attended the church at all opportunities, and have spent much time in private prayer. At this, my husband (who is a butcher) has been exceedingly enraged, and has threatened me severely as to what he would do to me if I did not leave

off going to John Fletcher's church, yea, if I dared to go again to any religious meetings whatever. When I told him that I could not in conscience refrain from going, at least to the parish church, he became outrageous, and swore dreadfully, and said if I went again, he would cut my throat as soon as I came back. This made me cry to God that he would support me; and, though I did not feel any great degree of comfort, yet, having a sure confidence in God, I determined to do my duty, and leave the event to him. Last Sunday, after many struggles with the devil and my own heart, I came downstairs ready for church. My husband said he should not cut my throat as he had intended, but he would heat the oven and throw me into it the moment I came home. Notwithstanding this threat, which he enforced with many bitter oaths, I went to church, praying all the way that God would strengthen me to suffer whatever might befall me. While you were speaking of the three children whom Nebuchadnezzar cast into the burning fiery furnace, I found all you said belonged to *me*. God applied every word to my heart; and, when the sermon was ended, I thought if I had a thousand lives, I could lay them all down for him. I felt so filled

with his love that I hastened home, fully determined to give myself to whatsoever God pleased, nothing doubting that he either would take me to heaven if he suffered me to be burnt to death; or that he would in some way deliver me, as he did his three servants that trusted in him. When I got to my own door I saw flames issuing from the oven, and I expected to be thrown into it immediately. I felt my heart rejoice, that if it were so the will of the Lord would be done. I opened the door, and to my utter astonishment saw my husband upon his knees praying for the forgiveness of his sins. He caught me in his arms, earnestly begged my pardon, and has continued diligently seeking God ever since.' "

The Lady, when I read this strange tale to her, remarked quietly and convincingly that with such preaching to-day she imagined there would be more men, and women, too, for that matter, attending church. I suspect she is right—as usual.

Fletcher's relations to the "evangelicals" of the eighteenth century were very intimate. As I have said, the Wesleys were devoted to him. No man in England better understood John Wesley, not even his brother Charles, or more thoroughly sympathized with his mis-

sion than John Fletcher; and in the society of no man of his age did Wesley have greater delight than with this best beloved of his preachers, the Saint John of Methodism, and of no other did Wesley entertain a higher opinion as to his gifts and graces. "Such a burning and shining light," he said, "instead of being confined to a country village ought to shine in every other corner of the land," and Wesley used all his arts of persuasion to draw him far afield, but it may well be doubted, as we shall see in a moment, whether Fletcher, if he had become an itinerant evangelist, as Wesley desired, could have rendered the invaluable service to Methodism which he did render a little later. Wesley visited Madeley, which he designates "an exceeding pleasant village, encompassed with trees and hills," and urged him to accompany him on a preaching tour, which Fletcher did now and again, but he would soon find his way back to his country parish. So great was Wesley's regard for him that he selected him for his successor, and in January, 1773, wrote to him a memorable letter in which he makes known his choice of the man upon whom his mantle shall fall. In this letter he speaks of the amazing work which God had wrought in Great Britain in

FLETCHER'S PULPIT AND BIBLE

MADELEY CHURCH

less than forty years, and how it was spreading in America. He states, though, that people are saying that "when Mr. Wesley dies, all this will come to naught," which he says "may happen unless a competent successor is found." He then describes the kind of a man his successor ought to be. "He must be a man of faith and love, and one that has a single eye to the advancement of the kingdom of God. He must have a clear understanding, a knowledge of men and things, particularly of the Methodist doctrine and discipline, a ready utterance, diligence and activity, with a tolerable share of health. There must be added favor with the people, with the Methodists in general. For, unless God turn their eyes and their hearts toward him, he will be quite incapable of the work. He must likewise have some degree of learning, because there are many adversaries, learned as well as unlearned, whose mouths must be stopped. But this cannot be done unless he be able to meet them on their own ground. But has God provided one so qualified? Who is he? Thou art the man!" He then goes on to tell Fletcher that he has the gifts, the knowledge of Methodism, as well as of men and things, experience, and piety for the task, meets any objections which

he may urge, and concludes, "without conferring, therefore, with flesh or blood, come and strengthen the hands, comfort the heart, share the labor of your affectionate friend and brother, John Wesley." This letter is in every respect a remarkable one, and indicates as nothing else could Wesley's judgment of the Vicar of Madeley. To have been chosen from among all of Wesley's preachers as the one preëminently qualified to carry forward the stupendous work of that ecclesiastical genius of the eighteenth century was no small distinction. But in the providence of God, Wesley lived to preach his "designated successor's" funeral sermon.

Fletcher early made the acquaintance of the more conspicuous leaders of the Methodist movement, and Madeley became a sort of Mecca to which many of them made religious pilgrimages. Hither, accompanied by Lady Anne Erskine, came the Countess of Huntingdon in 1767, for a memorable visit. Wesley had introduced him to this gracious woman in 1758, which was the beginning of a rare friendship, clouded for a season, it is true, by the unfortunate controversies concerning doctrines, which divided the evangelical house against itself, but beautiful even in the midst of storm.

Shortly after meeting Fletcher, the Countess

of Huntingdon—"an humble and pious countess, a modern prodigy," as Fletcher styled her in a letter to Charles Wesley—requested him to become one of her domestic chaplains, and thereafter Fletcher preached frequently in her ladyship's drawing room. In his audiences there he had many distinguished hearers, such as Lady Anne Frankland, daughter of the Earl of Scarborough, one of the firstfruits of Whitefield's ministry among the London nobility, and her sisters, Lady Barbara Leigh and Lady Henrietta Lumley; Lord Dartmouth, the founder of Dartmouth College; the Countess Delitz, Lord Bolingbroke, who "sat like an archbishop," one of the cleverest skeptics of the day; Lord Chesterfield, of whom Dr. Johnson once remarked that he was "a wit among lords, and a lord among wits"; the Duchess of Queensbury, daughter of the Earl of Clarendon, whose beauty and vivacity were celebrated by Prior, Pope, and Swift; Lady Fanny Shirley, an aunt of the Countess Selina of Huntingdon, the friend of Pope and the rival of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whose conversion Horace Walpole recounts in his gossiping letters, and many others. With all these he was a decided favorite, though unfortunately not all of them gave heed to his admonitions.

When Lady Huntingdon opened her famous college at Trevecca, Wales, for the education of young men resolved to devote themselves to God's service, she sought the active coöperation of her friend and chaplain, John Fletcher, whom she induced to undertake the superintendency. Without fee or reward Fletcher filled this important position, continuing meanwhile his work at Madeley, until the controversial tempest broke, and it seemed best to resign. One of the early students of Trevecca College, if not the very first student, was a young parishioner of Fletcher, a collier and iron-worker from Madeley Wood, who proved to be a preacher of decided ability. This was not Fletcher's only "son in the Gospel." Samuel Bradburn, a soldier's son, born at Gibraltar, brought to England when he was twelve, apprenticed to a shoemaker, converted, called to preach, set off for Madeley to see the renowned Fletcher, who with characteristic hospitality urged him to become his guest. To the end of his life Bradburn, who became a mighty preacher, unquestionably the greatest pulpit orator Wesley had in his company of preachers, thankfully acknowledged that he greatly owed his subsequent eminence to his Madeley visit. Adam Clarke, who knew him

well, thought that he had never heard his equal, and long after Fletcher's death the eloquent voice of Bradburn was echoing through England, and in him as in others John Fletcher being dead, continued to speak.

"Alike are life and death,
When life in death survives;
And the uninterrupted breath
Inspires a thousand lives."

One of the large services which the country minister contributes to the advance of the kingdom of God is the turning of the steps of worthy young men in the direction of the schools and the pulpits of the Christian Church.

To return to the Madeley visitors, hither came in 1784 Charles Simeon, then twenty-five years of age, full of zeal and of faith, and who when he came into the vicarage was greeted with fatherly affection by the fast-failing preacher. When Fletcher had secured the young man's assent to his request that he preach, he again went through the village as of old, bell in hand, calling the people to the sanctuary to hear "a young clergyman from Cambridge."

Among the friends of the Madeley vicar—a circle as distinguished in its way as the group which revolved around Samuel Johnson—was Henry Venn, who saw Fletcher often, and who

remarked with solemn emphasis to a brother clergyman after his friend's death: "Sir, Mr. Fletcher was a luminary—a *luminary* did I say? He was a *sun!* I have known all the great men for these fifty years, but I have known none like him. I was intimately acquainted with him, and was under the same roof with him once for six weeks, during which time I never heard him say a single word which was not proper to be spoken, and which had not a tendency to minister grace to the hearers."

Fletcher made the personal acquaintance of Berridge early in his career. He had heard much of him, and desiring to see him made a journey to Everton in 1760. The account of this visit is well known. On arriving he introduced himself to Berridge "as a new convert, who had taken the liberty to wait upon him for the benefit of his instruction and advice." Berridge, perceiving he was a foreigner, asked what countryman he was.

"A Swiss from the canton of Berne," was the reply.

"From Berne! Then probably you can give me some account of a young countryman of yours, John Fletcher, who has lately preached a few times for the Messrs. Wesley, and of

whose talents, learning, and piety they both speak in terms of highest eulogy. Do you know him?"

"Yes, sir, I know him intimately; and did those gentlemen know him as well they would not speak so highly of him. He is more obliged to their partial friendship than to his own merits."

"You surprise me," said Berridge.

"I have the best reason for speaking of John Fletcher as I did. I am John Fletcher."

"If you be John Fletcher," replied Berridge, "you must take my pulpit to-morrow." And it is more than likely that he did, for Berridge was not one to be denied. Later there was an estrangement occasioned by the controversy which alienated Lady Huntingdon and others from him, but which could not last long when between two such spiritually minded men.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any other to say what must be said concerning that period of Fletcher's life at Madeley in which he was engaged in a spirited defense of Arminian teachings. The statement shall be as brief as possible, but no account of Madeley or its famous preacher would be complete without some account of that "unhappy controversy," in which the doughty champion of

the doctrine of free will and the like played such a conspicuous part. At the Methodist Conference of 1770 it was felt that there had been "leaning too much toward Calvinism," and the fact was so stated. This fear was ever before them. They had said the same thing as far back as 1744. Now the conflict became general and painfully bitter. Few of those who were engaged in it came out of the fray creditably. Lady Huntingdon intimated that if there were instructors or students in her college at Trevecca, Wales, who sided with Wesley, there was no room for them. Benson was dismissed, and Fletcher resigned. There was a world of trouble. Meanwhile in the quiet country parish in Salop, Fletcher was writing his famous "Checks to Antinomianism." He vanquished Shirley and Sir Richard Hill. Then Rowland Hill came into the field, and Fletcher took his measure. Southey, in the "Book of Authors," says of this war of words, that the most conspicuous writers on the part of the Calvinists were Richard and Rowland Hill and Augustus Montague Toplady, and adds: "Never were any writings more thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism than those of the predestinarian champions. It would scarcely be credible that

No. 133.

A promise of pardon for the penitent.

Hymns.

1st Page 97, Hymn 97.

2d Page 121, Hymn 123.

3d Page 123, Hymn 125.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Isaiah 55. 7.

Introduction.

Jehovah has declared himself to be "the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness, and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin." A declaration this the truth of which has been proved by the experience of thousands, and tens of thousands of the children of men who have lived and died witnesses that Jesus Christ has power on earth to forgive sins; and who have now gained a station before the eternal throne. The readiness of the Divine Being, to have mercy upon, and to pardon the humble

three persons of good birth and education, and of unquestionable goodness and piety, should have carried on controversy in so vile a manner and with so detestable a spirit, if the hatred of the theologians had not unhappily become so proverbial." But little can be said for the other side, either. It was a war of epithets. That Hill was caustic and severe, there can be no question. Hill himself admits that his language was sharp, but excuses his severity by quoting some of the epithets applied by the Wesleys and others to the Calvinists, such as, for example, "devil-factors," "advocates for sin," "Satan's synagogue," "witnessing for the father of lies," "blasphemers," "Satan-sent preachers," "liars," "fiends." They certainly did not mince matters. Black was black, and no mistake. But at the distance of a hundred years and more, all this seems rather mild and commonplace, yet when the conflict of words was being waged it was wormwood and gall. This, however, must be said concerning Fletcher's part in it, he does not seem to have shown the same bitterness of spirit as some of the other writers. Of all the controversialists he came out with the least injury to his reputation. "If ever true Christian charity was manifested

in polemical writing," if I may quote Southey once more, "it was by Fletcher of Madeley." And Overton says, "Fletcher wrote like a scholar and like a gentleman, and what is better than either, like a Christian." Fletcher did not like the controversy. It was to him an unspeakable sorrow. "I long to be out of controversy," he wrote. He was not in any sense a party man. He desired merely to do his duty, and he did it well, for whatever may be thought of the famous theological war, this country minister did for Methodist theology what no one else at that time could have done. He had a remarkable knowledge of Scripture, and a gift of expression which enabled him to state Methodist doctrines as no other writer. It is agreed by all historians that John Wesley traveled, preached, formed societies, and governed them; that Charles Wesley wrote hymns for the converts to sing; and that Fletcher explained, elaborated, and defended the doctrines they believed. Wesley, in his itinerant travels, could not command the time to give to such a task; but Fletcher almost literally for six years shut himself up in Madeley that he might have time to write. Everything had to give way to this great purpose. Everything? Yes, everything—*except* his pastoral

duties, and with these nothing was ever allowed to interfere. How like Chaucer's parish priest, who

> "This noble ensample to his sheep he gave
> That first he wrought and afterward he taught."

Fletcher's devotion to the people of Madeley was complete. He lived for them and for their children. Their concern was his concern. Their spiritual development was always uppermost in his mind. He was among the first to see the value of the Sunday school, which had been started by Robert Raikes in 1780 at Gloucester. He undoubtedly knew of Raikes's new enterprise, and he was even more familiar with the work of Hannah More, "one of the most brilliant female ornaments of Christian literature," who had turned from her literary friends, Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a host of others, in London, after the death of Garrick in 1779, to live a life of quietness and goodness in a small village near Bristol, and who, moved by the shocking condition of the villagers, gave herself "to the poor and to those that have no helper," opening first one school, and then another. Fletcher almost immediately opened six schools in his parish, and the results were surprisingly good, not alone among the children, but also among adults.

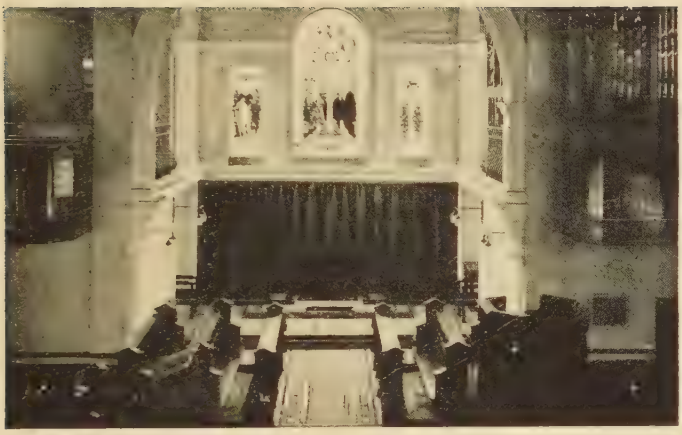
His love of children was always great. There is no more beautiful passage in the hundreds of letters which he wrote than is to be found in a letter written from Nyon, while on a visit there in 1778, in which he tells of meeting "some children in my wood gathering strawberries." "I spoke to them about our *common* Father. We felt a touch of brotherly affection. They said they would sing to their Father, as well as the birds; and followed me, attempting to make such melody as you know is commonly made in these parts. I outrode them, but some of them had the patience to follow me home; and said they would speak with me. The people of the house stopped them, saying I would not be troubled with children. They cried, and said they were sure I would not say so, for I was their good brother. The next day, when I heard this, I inquired after them, and invited them to come and see me; which they have done every day since. I make them little hymns which they sing." Could anything be more exquisitely beautiful than this!

This visit to Nyon was not the first which he had made since his departure for England. It was in 1770 that he first returned. He went to Marseilles, then made a visit to the Protestants in the Cevennes Mountains, and

finally set out for Italy. When in Rome he drove out to the Appian Way. As they approached it, Fletcher left the carriage, for, as he remarked, "I cannot *ride* over ground where the Apostle Paul once *walked*, chained to a soldier." As soon as he set his foot upon the old Roman road, he took off his hat, and, walking on with his eyes lifted up to heaven, he gave God thanks for the glorious truths which Paul preached. Arriving in Switzerland he was at once urged by the clergymen at Nyon to occupy their pulpits. There were not a few converts as the result. When the time had come for him to return to England, a good minister, of more than threescore years and ten, begged him with much earnestness, to remain a little longer, even if only for a single week; and when this was found to be impossible, the disappointed man burst into tears with the exclamation, "How unfortunate for my country! During my lifetime, it has produced but one angel of a man, and now it is our lot to lose him!"

Country preachers are not of necessity provincial. A man of the broadest culture and sympathies, Fletcher was interested in the affairs of the nation as well as the daily round of parish duties. In an unpublished letter,

dated Newcastle, May 21, 1776, Joseph Benson, speaking of the perilous times in England, says, "You see what a famous politician our friend Fletcher is become." I doubt, though, if it may be said that Fletcher turned politician. But like Wesley, Fletcher, although foreign born, was desirous of showing himself a loyal British subject, and wrote two pamphlets that year of the signing of the Declaration of American Independence, defending the government's course and contention with regard to the American colonies. These publications, which showed both literary skill and an unusual knowledge of English politics, consisted of letters addressed to writers who argued in favor of the colonists. It is generally felt that this lending of his pen for political discussion was an error of judgment, one of the few mistakes which the good man made. His motives were pure, but even pure motives will not always atone for mistakes. He should have let George III and his ministers fight their own battles. Fletcher was a man of peace, not of war. Nevertheless, the king, to whom one of the pamphlets was shown by the Lord Chancellor, was so well pleased with Fletcher's statement of the case, that he sent a messenger to him to inquire if ecclesiastical preferment would be acceptable to him,



CHANCEL FLETCHER'S CHURCH

APPIAN WAY

or if there was any other way he could serve him. But Fletcher had written from a stern sense of duty and not with the view of advancing his personal interests. "I want nothing but more grace," was his reply.

I have in my library another rare book, which is more like Fletcher than either his "Vindication of John Wesley's Calm Address," or his "Tract on American Patriotism." It is a copy of his "An Essay upon the Peace of 1783," translated from the French by the Rev. J. Gilpin, a presentation copy from the translator, with numerous rewritings of the translation in the translator's handwriting. The dedication is to the "honored Mrs. Mary De la Flechere, of Madeley in Shropshire." This was among the last of the writings of Fletcher, not published until after his death. It seems very fitting that one whose life had been given to the proclamation of the gospel of peace, should have written an apotheosis of peace at the very end of his life, the closing words of which are:

"Messiah reigns! by every Tongue confess'd,
Triumphant Lord of all, for ever bless'd!
Let Heaven's bright Host, in one grand Chorus join'd,
With all the mingling Tribes of Humankind,
Peace upon Earth, in endless Transports sing,
And Glory to our Everlasting King."

Unlike Beecher, who once replied to an inquiry as to his health that he had more of it than he knew what to do with, Fletcher for years had great "bodily weakness," and at times his condition was such as to awaken the gravest fears. Never rugged, of a delicate constitution, living ascetically, taking no exercise, toiling unceasingly, he developed pulmonary consumption, and as it seemed improbable that he could live much longer in England, he went to the south of France in 1777, and later to his native place, where he sought medical advice, and was tenderly cared for by loving friends and relatives. It is noteworthy that one of his first acts there, sick and weak as he was, was to write a letter "to the Societies in and about Madeley," addressing the people of that beautiful region as "my dear, very dear brethren." Letter followed letter, all breathing his concern for them and exhorting them to "continue steadfast in faith, patience, and love." Whenever he was away from Madeley, if only for a short time, he dispatched a letter to his flock, and his numerous pastoral letters are among the best of his many letters. For some time after his arrival in Switzerland he lived in the fine old house in which he was born, with its commanding view of Lake

Leman, with Geneva in the distance, and towering over all, some fifty miles away, Mont Blanc, monarch of mountains. Gradually his strength returned, and he preached occasionally, and then he grew impatient to be in England once more. He reached Madeley in May, 1781, after an absence from his people of four and a half years, during which he had only partially regained his health, but had done some of his most important literary work, such as his poem in French, published in Geneva with the title "La Louange," an extended paraphrase of Psalm 148, and his "The Portrait of Saint Paul, or, The True Model for Christians and Pastors," which was not published, however, until after his death, and now is little read, but which every modern minister might peruse with profit. He took up his parish work with the old zeal, resumed the old crusade against the public houses with greater success, opened Sunday schools in various neighborhoods, preached with increased power—and decided to marry! He was now fifty-two years of age, and the woman to whom he made the offer of marriage was ten years his junior, having been born in 1739. Mary Bosanquet had been led into the light, like Catherine Livingstone, who married Freeborn Garrettson, one of Amer-

ican Methodism's conspicuous preachers, by a servant. Later coming into possession of "a small fortune," she dedicated it and herself to good works, and for many years was known as one of the elect women of the evangelical movement. Lady Huntingdon knew her and esteemed her highly. John Wesley said that she was the only person in all England worthy of Mr. Fletcher, but then poor Wesley wasn't much of an authority on women, certainly not a judge of wives. They had long admired each other, but when they first became acquainted Fletcher regarded Miss Bosanquet's fortune as an insuperable barrier to their union; and Miss Bosanquet was too much occupied with her philanthropic schemes to think of being married. Their marriage proved a singularly happy one. On January 6, 1782, they spent their first Sunday at Madeley. Seventeen years afterward, Mrs. Fletcher wrote: "The first Sabbath after I came to Madeley my dear husband took me into the kitchen, where his people were assembled to partake of refreshment between the times of worship. He introduced me to them saying, 'I have not married this wife for myself only, but for your sakes also.'" And then the happy throng sang the hymn, that epithalamium of the redeemed soul, beginning

"Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
The gladly solemn sound!
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound,
The year of jubilee is come!
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

And thereafter they worked together for the well-being of the Madeley flock until Fletcher's death, August 14, 1785, after which she continued to reside in the vicarage, and there for thirty-one years she kept the anniversary of their wedding-day, and every day of every year was a blessing to the country parish in which her husband had lived and labored.

Never more beautifully was this good man's devotion to his people shown than the last Sunday he spent with them. I am going to let his devoted companion tell the story of that holy day and scene. "I begged him not to go to the church in the morning; but to let a pious brother, who was with us, preach in the yard; but he told me, it was the will of the Lord that he should go. When I met a little company of our pious women, on Sunday morning, I begged they would pray that he might be strengthened. In reading the prayers, he almost fainted. I got through the crowd, with a friend, and entreated him to come out of the desk, as did some of the others; but

in his sweet manner he let us know that we were not to interrupt the order of God. I then retired to my pew. All around were in tears. When he was a little refreshed by the windows being opened and a nosegay thrown into the desk by a friend, he proceeded with the service. Going into the pulpit, he preached with a strength and recollection which surprised us all. In his first prayer he said, 'Lord, thou wilt manifest thy strength in weakness. We confer not with flesh and blood, but put our trust under the shadow of thy wings.' His text was, 'O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.' After sermon, he went up the aisle to the communion table, with these words, 'I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim before the mercy-seat.' The congregation was large, and the service lasted till nearly two o'clock. Sometimes he could scarcely stand, and was often obliged to stop for want of power to speak. The people were deeply affected. Weeping was on every side. Notwithstanding his extreme weakness, he gave out several verses of hymns, and uttered various lively sentences of exhortation. As

soon as the service was over, we hurried him away to bed, where he immediately fainted." When he recovered from this swoon he said to Mrs. Fletcher with a smile, "Now, my dear, thou seest I am no worse for doing the Lord's work. He never fails me when I trust him." He lingered on through the week, often expressing himself in words of rapture and triumph. When another Sunday dawned it was seen that the end was not far distant. "From this time," concludes his wife's narrative, "he lay in a kind of sleep. And so remarkably composed —yea, triumphant—was his contenance, that the least trace of death was scarce discernible in it. About thirty-five minutes past ten on Sunday night, August 14, his precious soul entered into the joy of his Lord, without one struggle or groan, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. And here I break off my mournful story; but on my bleeding heart the fair picture of his heavenly excellencies will be forever drawn." Life's short day was over, and John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, had been faithful to its end.

KIDDERMINSTER

We had been spending some days in Oxford, and is there in all England a place of rarer charm? Late in the afternoon we had left our rooms in The Mitre to walk among the colleges and out into the fields, and at last found ourselves sauntering about Magdalen College and along that beautiful walk, the most beautiful in Oxford, known as Addison's Walk. It happened that earlier in the day I had been dipping into "The Spectator," where a sentence of Joseph Addison, who had been educated here in Magdalen College, had arrested my attention. It was this: "I once met with a page of Mr. Baxter: upon the perusal of it, I conceived so good an idea of the author's piety that I bought the whole book." When Addison was born, in 1672, Richard Baxter had long been a conspicuous figure among the ecclesiastics of England, so conspicuous, indeed, that later some of its political leaders preferred to have him in prison. When or how the brilliant essayist of Magdalen found that "page," which so whetted his appetite, and was the beginning of his acquaintance with the most prolific

ADDISON'S WALK, OXFORD

TOWER OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

theological writer of the seventeenth century, I do not chance to know, or whether he became as enthusiastic an admirer of the ascetic old "Independent," as Samuel Johnson, who quoted him several times in the "Rambler," mentioned him frequently in conversation with Boswell, and on one occasion, when that ubiquitous prodder asked which of Baxter's books he should read, replied with even excessive vehemence, which was quite unnecessary, of course, "Read any of them, for they are all good." It must have been on faith that this advice was given, for it may well be doubted whether Dr. Johnson, omnivorous reader though he was, had read all of the one hundred and sixty-eight or more volumes which Baxter wrote.

As we walked under the beautiful trees which had given shade to Addison, and many others since his day, we talked of him, and of Baxter, and of the century in which they lived. That seventeenth century was assuredly a century of great names—of Cromwell, "the rugged, outcast Cromwell," as Carlyle called him; of Laud, "weak and ill-starred"; of Hampden, Pym, and Strafford; of Lovelace, unhappiest of Cavalier poets; of Samuel Butler, prince among the writers of English burlesque, and Evelyn

and Pepys the diarists; of Sir Thomas Browne, Dryden, Locke, and Izaak Walton; of great preachers such as Owen, Howe, George Herbert, "that model of a man, a gentleman and a clergyman," as Coleridge characterized him; South, Barrow, Goodwin, Jeremy Taylor, the poet among preachers; Archbishop Usher, Donne, Hooker, Thomas Fuller, whom Charles Lamb thought an unequaled story-teller, and John Bunyan, who pictured the Sunny Delectable Mountains, and the wonderful glory beyond the Black River, as no writer of his age or any other age. And among all these Richard Baxter does not suffer by comparison with any or all of them. "If I were asked," says Brown in his "Puritan Preaching in England," "to single out one English town of the seventeenth century which more than any other came under the influence of the Spirit of God; and one preacher who, more than most, was successful in winning men for Christ, and in organizing a vigorous church life under his pastorate, I should say that town was Kidderminster and that preacher was Richard Baxter." And when the Baxter statue was unveiled in 1875, the catholic-minded Dean Stanley, who was one of the speakers, as he was at the unveiling of the Bunyan statue in Bedford

about the same time, and on many similar nonconformist occasions, said among other good things: "There have been three or four parishes in England which have been raised by their pastors to a national, almost a world-wide fame. Of these the most conspicuous is Kidderminster: for Baxter without Kidderminster would have been but half of himself; and Kidderminster without Baxter would have had nothing but its carpets."

This most conspicuous of English country parishes, now a considerable city with numerous churches, including several which contend for the honor of being *the* "Baxter's Church," is in the west of England, not far from Worcester with its stately cathedral. From Oxford it is not a hard journey, some eighty miles only, and through most beautiful mid-England scenery. It was July, the height of nature's season in England. The wild roses were still in bloom and the hedges sparkled with them; the numerous streams which flowed lazily through the meadows were covered with water lilies, and the fields flamed with poppies. The "Tom" Tower of Christ Church, Oxford, had hardly been lost to view, before we found ourselves in a perfect riot of color, which seemed, as we moved on to the northwest, to

flow back like a glorious golden stream, to the fair university city.

Kidderminster, like Madeley, is in the Severn Valley, some fifteen miles to the south. It is of ancient origin, there being various indications that in Roman times a civilized people had already taken up residence in the vicinity. The etymology of the word Kidderminster is in doubt—there are various other spellings of it, such as Kideministra, Kideministre, Kidaministr', and Kedirminstre—but the most probable conjecture is that it denotes the minster either of Saint Chad, or his almost equally famous brother Saint Ced, both of whom were the great apostles of the midlands, the former being the first bishop of Lichfield, A. D. 665, the latter Bishop of London, A. D. 664. This, however, is certain, that from the Norman Conquest, William the Conqueror owned practically all the land. The village had for the most part an uneventful history. Before Richard Baxter came to it there was little to relate concerning it. The most diligent search of the town records will yield only meager rewards. Henry III visited the place in 1226, and again seven years later. In 1665 coals were first brought here by water from Stourbridge. There is mention in the parish register of an earth-

ON THE SEVERN

WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

quake on the night of January 4, 1676. And more interesting than any other item is the account of the visit of John Howard, the famous Bedfordshire philanthropist, to the village jail, which consisted of two underground rooms called dungeons, about ten feet by six, near the market house, the keeper of which was the town crier, who was given an allowance of a shilling a month for attendance, and another shilling for straw for the prisoners' beds.

But with the coming of Richard Baxter to the Kidderminster Church in 1641, things began to happen in the little village on the Stour River. This mother-church of Kidderminster was an old one. "Wheare should I begin," writes an old chronicler, "in thys faire churche but with the founder thereof, who appearethe in the middest of the highe and stately East window of the Quyre consistinge of seaven panes, in a long robe uppon his knees offeringe in his hand the portrature of the churche to God: neyther are we ignorant of hys name beeinge Johannes Niger de Kidderminster." But the name of the founder makes little difference. It was Baxter who made the church famous—and useful—in the community. It hadn't stood for much up to that time. Baxter's naïve account of the condition of the

church and his call to it is worth giving. It seems he had been preaching about a year in a town called Dudley, "in much comfort, amongst a poor, tractable people, lately noted for drunkenness," and for a time at Bridgnorth, where "the people proved a very ignorant, dead-hearted people, the town consisting too much of inns and ale houses, and having no general trade to employ the inhabitants in, which is the undoing of great towns. So that though, through the great mercy of God, my first labors were not without success, to the conversion of some ignorant and careless sinners unto God, and were over-valued by those that were already regardful of the concernments of their souls, yet were they not so successful as they proved afterwards in other places." When he had been here nearly two years he was invited to Kidderminster. The way of it, in Baxter's own words, was thus:

"The long parliament, among other parts of their reformation, resolved to reform the corrupted clergy, and appointed a committee to receive petitions and complaints against them; which was no sooner understood, but multitudes in all countries came up with petitions against their ministers."

"Among all these complainers, the town of

KIDDERMINSTER

Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, drew up a petition against their minister. The vicar of the place they articled against as one that was utterly insufficient for the ministry; presented by a papist; unlearned; preached but once a quarter, which was so weakly, as exposed him to laughter, and persuaded them that he understood not the very substantial article of christianity; that he frequented ale houses, and had sometimes been drunk; that he turned the table altar-wise, &c.; with more such as this."

"The vicar, knowing his insufficiency, and hearing how two others in this case had sped, desired to compound this business with them, which was soon accomplished. Hereupon they invited me to them from Bridgnorth. The bailiff of the town, and all the feoffees, desired me to preach with them, in order to a full determination. My mind was much to the place, as soon as it was described to me, because it was a full congregation, and most convenient temple; an ignorant, rude, and revelling people for the greater part, who had need of preaching; and yet had among them a small company of converts; who were humble, godly, and of good conversations, and not much hated by the rest, and therefore the

fitter to assist their teacher; but, above all, because they had hardly ever had any lively, serious preaching among them. For Bridgnorth had made me resolve that I would never more go among a people that had been hardened in unprofitableness under an awakening ministry; but either to such as never had any convincing preacher, or to such as had profited by him. As soon as I came to Kidderminster, and had preached there one day, I was chosen, without opposition; for though fourteen only had the power of choosing, they desired to please the rest. And thus I was brought, by the gracious providence of God, to that place which had the chief of my labours, and yielded me the greatest fruits of comfort. And I noted the mercy of God in this, that I never went to any place in my life, among all my changes, which I had before desired, designed, or thought of, much less sought; but only to those that I never thought of, till the sudden invitation did surprise me." Baxter was never a self-seeker. Neither ambition nor self-love determined the course of his ministerial career.

He was in his twenty-fifth year when he began his ministry in wicked Kidderminster, having been born in 1615. He must have been richly endowed with natural gifts, for he

went but a short time to school, the precarious state of his health from infancy preventing. He read much, however, and in particular numerous religious books, "consolatory books" he called them, which, as was often the case in those far off days, if not now, entered largely into the fashioning of his life. Like Herbert, but for a briefer period, he had some inclination for court life, and spent a month at Whitehall, but his sensitive conscience soon revolted. "I had quickly enough of the court," he writes; "when I saw a stage-play, instead of a sermon, on the Lord's day in the afternoon, and saw what course was there in fashion, and heard little preaching but what was, as to one part, against the puritans, I was glad to be gone. At the same time it pleased God that my mother fell sick, and desired my return; and so I resolved to bid farewell to those kinds of employments and expectations."

"When I was going home again into the country, about Christmas day, A. D. 1634, the greatest snow began that hath been in this age, which continued thence till Easter, at which some places had it many yards deep; and before it was a very hard frost, which necessitated me to frost-nail my horse twice or thrice a day. On the road I met a waggon

loaded, where I had no passage by, but on the side of a bank, which, as I passed over, all my horse's feet slipped from under him, and all the girths brake, and so I was cast just before the waggon wheel, which had gone over me, but that it pleased God that suddenly the horses stopped, without any discernible cause, till I was recovered; which commanded me to observe the mercy of my Protector." Back there in that serious Puritan age, people were on the watch for indications of the will of God. Jehovah was concerned in the affairs of nations and individuals, and had a way of separating men by his providences to the work for which he desired them, at least some of them so thought; and it is not surprising therefore that we find Baxter, because of this strange deliverance from death, and also on account of the serious condition of his health, "conscious of a thirsty desire of men's conversion and salvation," and we are prepared for the resolution which he took "that if one or two souls only might be won to God, it would easily recompense all the dishonor which, for want of titles, I might undergo from men."

It may just as well be written down here as anywhere that his many sicknesses and bodily infirmities very largely determined all

his life the character of his work and teachings. It is his own testimony that the "continual expectation of death" was all through his life "an invaluable mercy" inasmuch as

"1. It greatly weakened temptations.
2. It kept me in a great contempt of the world.
3. It taught me highly to esteem time; so that, if any of it passed away in idleness or unprofitableness, it was so long a pain and burden to my mind.
4. It made me study and preach things necessary, and a little stirred up my sluggish heart to speak to sinners with some compassion, as a dying man to dying men."

Like Pascal, he was "seldom an hour free from pain." He had about every disease named in the books, and some besides. No fewer than thirty-six doctors attended him at various times, and he took all their prescriptions, "beginning with scurvy-grass and boiled beer, and finishing with a golden bullet which had been recommended by a country quack." Might it not with reason be expected that all this suffering would color his preaching and writings? Indeed, he seems to have been regarded by some in his day as a sad, morose, and unhappy man, but it is the testimony of those who knew him well that he was a singularly happy man. He himself says that he knew nothing of low spirits or nervous depression, notwith-

standing his bodily ailments. What his sicknesses did do for him was to give him an almost abnormal sense of the value of time; every moment was a fragment of eternity, for the right use of which he must give an account to God. When men live seriously, as Baxter did in the seventeenth century and Fletcher in the eighteenth, time is one of God's divinest gifts, and the wanton use of it one of the greatest of sins. On one occasion, when some visitors came to Baxter's house, and after sitting with him for a while said, "We are afraid, sir, that we break in upon your time," he was just frank enough to answer, "To be sure you do." Such a conception of time always gives directness to speech, urgency to manner, zeal and passion to endeavor. What his bodily weakness did for the world was that out of it came a book, which has been an inestimable blessing to thousands upon thousands. His "Saints' Everlasting Rest," a book which has been more widely read and more generally useful than any other English book except "The Pilgrim's Progress," was born of sickness. "Whilst I was in health I had not the least thought of writing books, or of serving God in more public way than preaching; but when I was weakened with great bleeding, and was

sentenced to death by the physicians, I began to contemplate more seriously on the everlasting rest which I apprehended myself to be on the borders of."

His attitude toward life and suffering may be seen in these verses which he wrote:

"Lord, it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

"If life be long I will be glad,
That I may long obey;
If short—yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that unto God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door.

"Come, Lord, when grace has made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be!

"Then I shall end my sad complaints,
And weary, sinful days;
And join with the triumphant saints,
To sing Jehovah's praise.

"My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him."

The church to which Baxter came is still standing, though it has undergone many radical alterations. It occupies a commanding position on the edge of a small hill, beneath which now runs a canal, and beyond, lower in the valley, a small stream called the Stour, the water of which is thought to possess a peculiar value in the washing of the worsted yarns used in the manufacture of the carpets for which Kidderminster has long been famed. The church-yard is planted with noble avenues of elms, some of which at least are traditionally said to have been planted by Baxter, which is not improbable. The building dates from about 1315, and Baxter found it a "most convenient temple," "very capacious and the most commodious that ever I was in." But large as it was, with Baxter in the pulpit, and Baxter calling from house to house, and in all places speaking "as a dying man to dying men," it speedily became "pitifully small." Gallery above gallery was added until there were five of them, and there was room for no more. When, however, in 1787 the church was "restored," the architect seems to have been at much pains to exorcise the spirit of the mighty preacher from the scene of his spiritual triumphs, and as veneration for his memory had

BAXTER'S CHURCH

A KIDDERMINSTER STREET

in the century following his death appreciably waned, nearly all the furniture in use in his time was put up at auction and sold to the highest bidder, so that if one would see the Baxter relics in Kidderminster, he must look for them in other churches than the one in which he preached. Baxter's pulpit was purchased for the paltry sum of five pounds and placed in the Old Meeting, an independent church. When a split occurred, and part of the congregation seceded, the Baxter pulpit was carried away by the secessionists, and set up in the New Meeting (Unitarian) which they built, and there in a corner of the vestry it may be seen to-day. It is of oak, octagonal in shape, and elaborately adorned with carved flowers and other ornamentations common to the Jacobean period. In Baxter's day it must have been gorgeous with its gold and various bright colors, traces of which are still to be seen. On the face of the pulpit, and immediately beneath the preacher's desk, are the words "Praise the Lord," than which there could be no better. On one side of the pulpit is a framed manuscript, written by the Rev. George Butt, who was vicar of Baxter's church at the time of the sale of the church furniture in 1787, and a poet of more than local fame.

His poem probably went with the pulpit, all for five pounds! But his lines are worth quoting in spite of this probability:

"Here let the name of Baxter long be known;
Here let his glory live, whom none excell'd
In all the duties of the pastor's care;
Whether his mental faculties you weigh,
Or yet the noble virtues of his heart.
Vain pomp and worldly riches he despised;
That fame which strenuous virtue gives the few
He saw, he sought, he seiz'd, then rais'd his head,
Towering superior, like some cloud-capt cliff,
Which scorns the fury of the stormy winds,
Whence rushes forth the fertilizing stream
To which the plenteous harvest owes its birth,
(An harvest long remember'd through these plains,)
Thus Baxter stood, amid surrounding foes.
By his example fir'd, go, banish sloth;
Pour forth the streams of sacred eloquence,
Instruct, then add example's clearer light,
And gain a harvest of immortal souls.
Go, banish sloth; and strive to equal him;
But vain the attempt. Let this at least be thine,
(Whoe'er thou art, whate'er thy strength can do,)
With pure benevolence to serve mankind,
And, through a Saviour, gain immortal bliss."

Baxter's communion table is in use in the Old Meeting, and the oak carved pews in the Countess of Huntingdon Chapel. Baxter's spirit of devotion and the work he accomplished in Kidderminster could not, however, be put up and sold at auction. Neither architect nor

vicar could thus lightly dispose of *him*. Personality is something that cannot be bartered. The spiritual influence of a godly man like Richard Baxter "bloweth where it listeth" and cannot be transferred by sale or restrained by forgetfulness. Baxter transformed Kidderminster, and changes in his church, however iconoclastic, cannot do away with Baxter.

How the transformation was effected let the good man tell in his own way. But first it should be said that his early activities in Kidderminster created enmities and stirred up pronounced opposition. In the churchyard is a broken fragment of what was once the Kidderminster Cross. Its destruction dates from Baxter's day, when it was broken in a riot in which his life was sought. It was on this spot that his life was twice attempted; once when he was attacked by a drunken parishioner, whom he had been compelled to eject from the communion of the church, who, as Baxter came into the churchyard, seized him with the purpose of killing him, but as he caught him by the coat, Baxter unbuttoned it, and leaving it in the man's hands got safely away. The other occasion was when Parliament had sent out an order for the demolition of all statues and images of any of the three Persons of the

Trinity, or of the Virgin Mary, which should be found in the churches or on churchyard crosses.

Then later came on the period of the Civil Wars, and Baxter's situation became critical, for he was right in the heart of the struggle, the main army of the king, commanded by Prince Rupert, and that of the Parliament under the Earl of Essex, being at that time not far distant. When he was preaching, October 23, 1642, the sound of cannon was heard. It was the battle of Edgehill. When Charles I fled from the fatal field of Worcester, he skirted Kidderminster, and later that same evening some of the Royalist troops came galloping into the village, shouting the news of Cromwell's victory. "I was newly gone to bed," says Baxter, "when the noise of the Flying Horse acquainted us of the overthrow; and a piece of one of Cromwell's troops that guarded the bridge at Bewdley, having tidings of it, came into our streets, and stood in the open market-place, before my door, to surprise those that passed by; and so, when many hundreds of the flying army came together, and the thirty troopers cried 'Stand,' and fired at them, they either hasted away or cried quarter, not knowing in the dark what number it was that charged them; thus, as many were taken there as so

few men could lay hold on; and, till midnight, the bullets flying towards my door and windows, and the sorrowful fugitives hastening by for their lives, did tell me the calamitousness of war." He was not a partisan, nor did he desire to be. When Cromwell invited him to become a chaplain to a company at Cambridge he declined the invitation, but later, when he went two days after the battle of Naseby to find some friends in Cromwell's army, seeing the dire need of his troops, and an opportunity for usefulness among the soldiers, he reconsidered and accepted, and it is recorded that he said some plain things about the moral condition of the parliamentary troops which much displeased their great leader.

After his return to Kidderminster he gave fourteen fruitful years to that country parish. And now for his own story of his "employments, successes, and advantages" there:

"I preached, before the wars, twice each Lord's day; but after the war, but once, and once every Thursday, besides occasional sermons. Every Thursday evening, my neighbors that were most desirous and had opportunity met at my house, and there one of them repeated the sermon, and afterwards they proposed what doubts any of them had about the

sermon, or any other case of conscience, and I resolved their doubts. And, last of all, I caused sometimes one, and sometimes another of them to pray, to exercise them; and sometimes I prayed with them myself, which, besides singing a psalm, was all they did. And once a week, also, some of the younger sort, who were not fit to pray in so great an assembly, met among a few more privately, where they spent three hours in prayer together. Every Saturday night they met at some of their houses to repeat the sermon of the last Lord's day, and to pray and prepare themselves for the following day. Once in a few weeks, we had a day of humiliation, on one occasion or other. Every religious woman that was safely delivered, instead of the old feastings and gossipings, if they were able, did keep a day of thanksgiving, with some of their neighbours with them, praising God, and singing psalms, and soberly feasting together. Two days every week, my assistant and I myself took fourteen families between us for private catechising and conference; he going through the parish, and the town coming to me. I first heard them recite the words of the catechism, and then examined them about the sense, and lastly urged them, with all possible engaging reason and vehemence,

to answerable affection and practice. If any of them were perplexed, through ignorance or bashfulness, I forbore to press them any farther to answers, but made them hearers, and either examined others, or turned all into instruction and exhortation. But this I have opened more fully in my 'Reformed Pastor.' I spent about an hour with a family, and admitted no others to be present, lest bashfulness should make it burdensome, or any should talk of the weaknesses of others. So that all the afternoons, on Mondays and Tuesdays, I spent in this, after I had begun it; for it was many years before I did attempt it; and my assistant spent the mornings of the same days in the same employment. Before that, I only catechised them in the church, and conferred with, now and then, one occasionally.

"Besides all this, I was forced, five or six years, by the people's necessity, to practise physic. A common pleurisy happening one year, and no physician being near, I was forced to advise them, to save their lives; and I could not afterwards avoid the importunity of the town and country round about. And, because I never once took a penny of any one, I was crowded with patients, so that almost twenty would be at my door at once;

and though God, by more success than I expected, so long encouraged me, yet, at last, I could endure it no longer; partly because it hindered my other studies, and partly because the very fear of miscarrying and doing any one harm did make it an intolerable burden to me. So that, after some years' practice, I procured a godly, diligent physician to come and live in the town, and bound myself, by promise, to practise no more, unless in consultation with him in case of any seeming necessity. And so, with that answer, I turned them all off, and never meddled with it more.

"My public preaching met with an attentive, diligent auditory. Having broke over the brunt of the opposition of the rabble before the wars, I found them afterwards tractable and unprejudiced. The congregation was usually full. Our private meetings also were full. On the Lord's day there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear a hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons, as you passed through the streets. In a word, when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name; and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not past one family in the side of

OLDEST DOOR IN KIDDERMINSTER

INTERIOR BAXTER'S CHURCH

a street that did not so; and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And those families which were the worst, being inns and ale houses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious.

"When I set upon personal conference with each family, and catechising them, there were very few families in all the town that refused to come; and those few were beggars at the town's ends, who were so ignorant that they were ashamed it should be manifest. And few families went from me without some tears, or seemingly serious promises for a godly life. Yet many ignorant and ungodly persons there were still among us; but most of them were in the parish, and not in the town, and in those parts of the parish which were farthest from the town. Some of the poor men did competently understand the body of divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies. Some of them were so able in prayer, that very few ministers did match them, in order and fullness, and apt expressions, and holy oratory, with fervency. Abundance of them were able to pray very laudably with their families, or with others. The temper of their minds, and the correctness of their lives, were

much more laudable than their parts. The professors of serious godliness were generally of very humble minds and carriage; of meek and quiet behaviour unto others; and of blamelessness in their conversations." That is a picture of a country pastor at work, which for simplicity and beauty is unmatched in literature. Sir James Stephen, the English statesman, and, until a short time of his death, regius professor of modern history in Cambridge University, being succeeded in the professorship by Charles Kingsley, in his Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, a series of most valuable biographical studies, says: "Little was there in common between Kidderminster and the 'sweet smiling' Auburn. Still less alike were the 'village preacher,' who 'ran his godly race,' after the fancy of Oliver Goldsmith, and the 'painful preacher,' whose emaciated form, gaunt visage, and Geneva bands attested the severity of his studies, and testified against prelatic ascendency. Deeper yet the contrast between the delicate hues and fine touches of the portrait drawn from airy imagination, and Baxter's catalogue of his weekly catechisings, fasts, and conferences; of his Wednesday meetings and Thursday disputations; and of the thirty helps by which he was enabled to quicken into

spiritual life the inert mass of a rude and vicious population. But, truth against fiction, all the world over, in the rivalry for genuine pathos and real sublimity! Though ever new and charming, after ten thousand repetitions, the plaintive, playful, melodious poetry of the 'Deserted Village' bears to the homely tale of the curate of Kidderminster a resemblance like that of the tapestried lists of a tournament to the well-fought field of Roncesvalles. Too prolix for quotation, and perhaps too sacred for our immediate purpose, it records one of those moral conquests which attest the existence in the human heart of faculties which, even when most oppressed by ignorance, or benumbed by guilt, may yet be roused to their noblest exercise, and disciplined for their ultimate perfection."

It was this same brilliant man who first interested Dean Stanley in Baxter, when he urged him to read the last twenty-four pages of the first part of "Baxter's Narrative of His Own Life." "Lose not a day," he said, "in reading it. You will never repent of it." "That very night," says Stanley, "I followed his advice, and I have ever since publicly and privately advised every theological student to do the same."

The house in which Baxter lived in Kidderminster is still standing. It is on High Street, two houses from the old Town Hall, and a short stone's throw from the famous Bull Ring, in which the Baxter memorial statue was placed. The houses on this side of the street are without back yards, as another street—Swan Street, or as it is commonly called "Behind Shops"—runs directly back of them. Baxter's house was in a noisy location for one who held as many meetings in the parsonage as he did, and who wrote so constantly when not otherwise engaged. Had he not been the unselfish man that he was, he might have had, like Herbert and Kingsley, a much larger and more commodious house in a quieter situation, and a garden "girdled with trees." But such was his goodness of heart that he would never occupy the rectory, although Parliament authorized him to do so, preferring to allow the old vicar to live in it without interference. Here in this small and unattractive High Street house, Baxter dwelt during the twenty years he was in Kidderminster. His study was the front room on the first floor, and here he received his friends and held his meetings. His library must have been a large one, the books being arranged on shelves placed against the

walls. Many of these books must have been ponderous volumes, and some one has wittily suggested that their nature may be judged from his quotations in his published writings. Once when in this library he had a narrow escape as he himself relates: "As I sat in my study at Kidderminster, the weight of my greatest folio books broke down three or four of the highest shelves, and I sat close under them, and they fell down on every side of me, and not one of them hit me, save one upon the arm, whereas the place, the weight, and greatness of the books was such, and my head just under them that it was a wonder they had not beaten out my brains, one of the shelves right over my head having the six volumes of Dr. Walton's 'Oriental Bible' and all Austin's works, and the 'Bibliotheca Patrum' and 'Marlote.'" That *was* a narrow escape.

Baxter was always a lover of books. When he had become a wanderer, after having refused the king's offer of the bishopric of Hereford in order that he might remain with his flock at Kidderminster, and then being forced to leave because of the state of public affairs, he begged to be permitted "quietly to follow my brief study and once again have the use of my books, which I have not seen this ten

years, and hope for a room for their standing at Kidderminster where they are eaten with worms and rats, having no security for my quiet abode in any place enough to encourage me to send for them." Later, permission was given him to remove his library to London, more than "a hundred miles, and paid dear for the carriage." But within the next few years his goods were so frequently levied upon for the fees against illegal preaching, that after first hiding his library he was compelled to sell it. He writes, "My books have been my treasure, and I value little more on earth. I have been now without a treasure." What few books remained to him when he died, he bequeathed these to "poor scholars."

Here in his Kidderminster study he wrote his sermons, which ranked with the best of the productions of the Puritan divines. Doddridge placed them first, saying of Baxter's preaching, "I cannot forbear looking upon him as one of the greatest orators our nation hath produced." As a rule kings don't seem to care much for long sermons, but Charles II could listen to Baxter two hours. This preacher took his pulpit work seriously. For years he entered the pulpit in the fear that he might not leave it alive; his knees shook under him,

not from fear of the faces of men; but because he had to preach in the sight of God—"as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." "Of all preaching in the world," he wrote, "that speaks not stark lies, I hate that preaching which tendeth to make the hearers laugh, or to move their minds with tickling levity, and affect them, as stage-players use to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence for the name of God." Simple, direct, and without ornamentation in style, intense in utterance, and powerful in appeal, Baxter preached with the eloquence of a soul burning with devotion alike to God and to men. "I several times heard Baxter preach," says Calamy, one of his biographers, "which I remember not to have done before. He talked in the pulpit with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of express from thence to make a report concerning it. He was well advanced in years, but delivered himself in public as well as in private, with great vivacity and freedom, and his thoughts *had a peculiar edge.*"

It was here too at Kidderminster that his best known books were written. Baxter was an amazingly productive author, far more so than any man of his time. The number and

extent of his works almost passes belief, when one considers his immense correspondence—scores of people wrote him concerning matters of conscience and questions of doctrine and interpretation of the Scriptures—his constant ill health, and his many pastoral concerns. Orme, his chief biographer, makes this astounding comparative statement: "The works of Bishop Hall amount to ten volumes octavo; Lightfoot's extend to thirteen; Jeremy Taylor's to fifteen; Dr. Goodwin's would make about twenty; Dr. Owen's extend to twenty-eight; Richard Baxter's, if printed in a uniform edition, could not be compressed in less than sixty volumes, making more than from thirty to forty thousand closely printed pages." The total number of his separate publications is given as one hundred and sixty-eight or thereabouts, nearly sixty of which were issued during his Kidderminster pastorate. Some of these were small tracts, and some broad sheets, or hand-bills. He believed thoroughly in this way of spreading the truth, finding it a distinct help in his pastoral work. There were also numerous quarto volumes, which having served their purpose, have now, as Hallam says of the books of another writer, "ceased to belong to men and have become the property of

BAXTER'S STATUE, KIDDERMINSTER

TRIMPLEY GREEN

moths." But three of the books which he wrote in the study of the Kidderminster house are immortal. They are his "Saints' Rest," his "Call to the Unconverted," which Bishop Asbury considered "one of the best pieces of human composition in the world to awaken the lethargic souls of poor sinners," and his "Reformed Pastor," as profitable perhaps, everything considered, from the pastoral point of view, as any book ever published. These three books are among the classics. "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," the second book he published, was, as I have said, born of sickness and pain, and so helpful was it to so many people that more than one writer has said that Baxter needs no other memorial so long as there is a copy of this book in existence. It is a quarto volume of more than eight hundred pages, and was written in six months. He dedicated it to his "Dearly Beloved Friends, the Inhabitants of Kidderminster." Alterations were made in subsequent editions, one very amusing one being the omission of the names of Brook, Hampden, and Pym, as among those whom he rejoiced to have the prospect of meeting in heaven! He wanted to please the enemies of Puritanism, but his hope was not realized. Notwithstanding this exhibition

of partisan weakness, this has been one of the most useful of his works, particularly for Christians, for whom it was chiefly intended.

His "Call to the Unconverted" was written on the suggestion of Bishop Usher, who desired the great controversialist, at the same time a most gentle guide of all who were in rough places, to set down plain directions suited to the various states of Christians. The book has had a circulation of hundreds of thousands of copies, and has been singularly blessed to many troubled hearts. "Through God's mercy I have had information of almost whole households converted by this small book, which I set so light by. And as if all this in England, Scotland, and Ireland, were not mercy enough to me, God, since I was silenced, hath sent it over on its message to many beyond the seas; for when Mr. Eliot had printed all the Bible in the Indians' language, he next translated this my 'Call to the Unconverted,' as he wrote to us here."

This reference to John Eliot, the "apostle to the Indians," opens an interesting chapter in Baxter's career. Eliot had been born in England in 1604, and had been educated at Cambridge. It was in 1631, when Baxter was a young lad of sixteen, that he sailed from England for

Boston. Whether Baxter met him before his departure, may be doubted, but he was always deeply interested in Eliot's work among the Indians. He not only wrote him concerning it, but Governor Endicott of Massachusetts, and others. His correspondence with Eliot, of whom he once said, "There is no man on earth that I honor above him," continued during their lives, and that Baxter was interested in missionary efforts in an age when such beneficent enterprises were few, and when sympathetic support of them was rarer, is to his credit.

The greatest of the books which he wrote at Kidderminster, and unquestionably the greatest of all his works, is "The Reformed Pastor," which has been universally commended as an invaluable contribution to the literature of the pastoral life. Perhaps no other book drives home the sense of clerical responsibility with such tremendous power. Of it Philip Doddridge said: " 'The Reformed Pastor' is a most extraordinary performance and should be read by every young minister before he takes a people under his stated care, and I think the practical part of it review every three or four years, for nothing would have a greater tendency to awaken the spirit of a minister to that zeal in his work, for want of which many good

ministers are but shadows of what by the blessing of God they might be, if the maxims and measures laid down in this incomparable treatise were strenuously pursued." Van Oosterzee, one of the greatest of writers on Practical Theology, says that it was an inestimable blessing for England that at this same period, namely, the seventeenth century, the powerful voice of Richard Baxter in his "Reformed Pastor" was raised to proclaim so earnestly the indispensable necessity of individual pastoral care; and in another place, speaking of the wonderful reception which was accorded to Wesley's preaching, Van Oosterzee stated that the secret of it was to be found exclusively in the power of truth on the consciences of men, and upon the personality of the preacher itself, and then asks, "And in what else is to be sought the key to the power with which John Bunyan (d. 1688), the writer of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and Richard Baxter (d. 1691), the author of the 'Reformed Pastor,' could by their simple language attract and win so many, and yet speak so long after their death?" There are numerous points of likeness between these three men, Baxter, Bunyan, and Wesley. They alike preached mightily, and alike wrote books that have permanent elements of value

in them. If Wesley was the greatest preacher and Bunyan the greatest writer, Baxter was the greatest pastor. He was not a parish priest who lived apart from men; he had business with them and went where they were. He coveted them for God. He was the greatest pastoral evangelist of his age. On one occasion when Baxter was praying, and the devil seized the opportunity to tempt him along the line of his popularity as a preacher, the simple-hearted man cried out, "Not this, not this, O Lord, but the souls of this poor people of Kidderminster!" Baxter was the pastor pre-eminent. It was out of his experiences as a country pastor at Kidderminster that he wrote his immortal book, and this book, like Herbert's "Country Parson," must be considered as a full portrayal of his own marvelously successful work as a pastoral evangelist, and the principles by which he was guided. It was begun as a sermon to be preached at a meeting of preachers for humiliation and prayer, December 4, 1655, but Baxter was ill and unable to be present. The text of the sermon which is the silver thread running through the volume is taken from Acts 20. 28: "Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to

feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood"; the main purpose of the sermon is to show the nature and value of pastoral work, especially in private instruction and catechising. Baxter laid much emphasis upon the importance of catechising. Herein, in the zeal and the affection which he displayed in following his people to their homes for the purpose of applying with more close and pungent force the truths he announced from the pulpit, lay the secret of his conspicuous success. It is noteworthy that his successes in the earliest period of his ministry were among the young. In his preface to his work "A Compassionate Counsel to all Young Men," he says, "In the place where God most blessed my labors at Kidderminster, my first and greatest success was upon the youth." Baxter insisted that catechising was a more difficult work than sermonizing, and I am not sure that it does not lay heavier demands upon ministers to do fine and successful pastoral work than it does to preach. It is a hard task which he sets for every minister, in country parish or city church. "The ministerial work," he says, "must be managed purely for God and the salvation of the people, and not for any private ends of our own. A wrong end

makes all the work bad, how good soever in itself. It is not serving God, but ourselves, if we do it not for God, but for ourselves. They that set about this as a common work, to make a trade of it for their worldly livelihood, will find that they have chosen a bad trade, though a good employment. Self-denial is of absolute necessity in every Christian, but of a double necessity in a minister, as he hath a double sanctification or dedication to God. Without self-denial he cannot do God an hour's faithful service." Or take this other passage: "So great a God, whose message we deliver, should be honored by our delivery of it. It is a lamentable case, that in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting consequence to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so weakly, so unhandsomely, so imprudently, or so slightly, that the whole business should miscarry in our hands, and God be dishonored, and sinners rather hardened than converted, and all this much through our weakness or neglect! How many a time have carnal hearers gone jeering home at the palpable and dishonorable failings of the preacher! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy; and we bring not with us so much skill and zeal as to awaken them!"

Writers on Homiletics refer to this book almost more frequently than any other. When they want to sharpen the point of some statement or reinforce their own position, they turn to "The Reformed Pastor." At random I take from a shelf a book. It chances to be Gladden's, "The Christian Pastor," and almost the first paragraph that strikes my eye is this: "When we are commanded," says Baxter, "to 'take heed to all the flock,' it is plainly implied that flocks must be no greater, regularly and ordinarily, than we are capable of overseeing or taking heed of; that particular churches should be no greater, or ministers no fewer, than may consist with taking heed to *all;* for God will not lay upon us natural impossibilities. He will not bind men on so strict account as we are bound, to leap up to the moon, to touch the stars, to number the sands of the sea. If it be the pastoral work to oversee and take heed of all the flock, then surely there must be such a proportion of pastors assigned to each flock, or such a number of souls in the care of each pastor, as he is able to take such heed to as is here required." The next book on the shelf is Christlieb's "Lectures on Preaching," and in this I note: "The classical work of Richard Baxter, 'The

ARLEY VILLAGE

SAINT PETER'S CHURCH, ARLEY

Reformed Pastor,' is highly to be recommended. There, *inter alia*, we read: 'It is a fearful thing to be an unsanctified professor, but much more to be an unsanctified preacher. Doth it not make you tremble when you open the Bible, lest you should read there the sentence of your own condemnation? When you pen your sermons, little do you think that you are drawing up indictments against your own souls! When you are arguing against sin, that you are aggravating your own!' " And a glance at the next book in the row, and the next, and the next, discloses a like appreciation of Baxter as a pastor or a writer.

My own copy of this book bears date of 1860. Following the title-page are these words, which were spoken a few hours before he died by Richard Knill, a distinguished English missionary and preacher, who was the first to direct Spurgeon's attention to the ministry: "If, without impropriety, I may refer here, as I believe I have done elsewhere, to the service which, during fifty-four years, I have been allowed to render to our great Master, I may declare my thankfulness in being able, in some small degree, to rejoice that the conversion of sinners has been my aim. I have made, next to the Bible, Baxter's 'Reformed Pastor' my

rule as regards the object of my ministry. It were well if that volume were often read by all our pastors—a study which I now earnestly recommend to them." And the more I read the book, the more convinced I am of the value of the advice. Had Baxter done nothing else in his country parish except to write "The Reformed Pastor," his fame would be sure, but he could not have written it, had he done less than he did do. He made over Kidderminster, and "The Reformed Pastor" is both the witness and the proof.

There came a time, however, when Baxter could no longer remain at Kidderminster. The Act of Uniformity passed in 1662, which required among other intolerable things assent to everything prescribed in the "Book of Common Prayer," drove him and some two thousand other clergymen from the church. And when he left the scene of his apostolic labors and his weeping people, it was "to pass the remainder of his life in loathsome jails or precarious hiding places, there to achieve in penury and almost ceaseless pain works without a parallel in the history of English theological literature, for their extent, or their prodigality of intellectual wealth." When Wordsworth wrote his sonnet on "Clerical

Integrity," may he not have had Richard Baxter in mind:

> "Nor shall the eternal roll of praise eject
> Those Unconforming; whom one rigorous day
> Drives from their Cures, a voluntary prey
> To poverty, and grief, and disrespect,
> And some to want—as if by tempests wrecked
> On a wild coast; how destitute! did They
> Feel not that Conscience never can betray,
> That peace of mind is Virtue's sure effect.
> Their altars they forego, their homes they quit,
> Fields which they love, and paths they daily trod,
> And cast the future upon Providence;
> As men the dictate of whose inward sense
> Outweighs the world; whom self-deceiving wit
> Lures not from what they deem the cause of God."

When Baxter left Kidderminster he did not go alone. Up to this time he had remained unmarried, nor had he thought to marry, but shortly after his ejection from the church he wed "a lady of gentle birth," who until her death nineteen years later, was his devoted comrade and friend. "In prison, in sickness, in evil report, in every form of danger and fatigue, she was still with unabated cheerfulness at the side of him to whom she had pledged her conjugal faith: prompting him to the discharge of every duty, calming the asperities of his temper, his associate in unnumbered acts of philanthropy, embellishing his humble home by

the little arts with which a cultivated mind imparts its own gracefulness to the meanest dwelling-place; and during the nineteen years of their union, joining with him in one unbroken strain of filial affiance to the Divine mercy, and of a grateful adoration for the Divine goodness." After her death Baxter wrote what he called "A Breviate of Her Life," in which he drew a portrait of her, the original of which, as Sir James Stephen says, it would have been criminal not to love. Of his imprisonment on the charge of heresy, sedition, and hostility to the episcopacy, and of his trial before Judge Jeffreys, at which that ill-bred justice, whose conduct during the trial has been faithfully portrayed by Macaulay in a famous passage, adorned the sick, aged, and feeble prisoner with such epithets as "the old rogue who has poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine," "the old blockhead," "a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog," "an old knave," "the unthankful villain," and other such, little more need be said. He is found guilty, of course. That had already been decided upon. When at the conclusion of the charge of the Chief Justice Baxter asked him, "Does your lordship think any jury will pretend to pass a verdict upon me upon such a trial?" his lordship answered,

"I'll warrant you, Mr. Baxter; don't you trouble yourself about that." He is sent to prison, but what prison could hold a soul like his? Matthew Henry, the commentator, visits him, and finds him "rejoicing in God." He writes to old friends at Arley, Trimpley Green, and Wolverley, all near Kidderminster, and where he had occasionally preached when he was a country pastor. He writes to friends in other places also, and day by day during the two years of imprisonment lives over the happy, useful years at Kidderminster. Ah, those years in that country parish were his best years. Of all the lines he wrote, none show deeper feeling or more tender sympathy than those in his poem "Love Breathing Thanks and Praise," in which he writes of Kidderminster and his work in that parish:

"But among all, none did so much abound
With fruitful mercies as that barren ground,
Where I did make my best and longest stay,
And bore the heat and burden of the day;
Mercies grew thicker there than summer flowers;
They over-numbered my daies and hours.
There was my dearest flock and special charge,
Our hearts in mutual love Thou did'st enlarge:
'Twas there that mercy did my labors bless
With the most great and wonderful success."

SOMERSBY

"I am now at Somersby," wrote the brilliant Arthur Hallam, in the spring of 1832, to an intimate acquaintance, "not only as the friend of Alfred Tennyson, but as the lover of his sister," and thus as by magic we find ourselves in the rectory of a country parish in England, which will be famous for all time as the birthplace of one of the greatest of English poets in the nineteenth century. Poor Hallam, of whom Gladstone said, quoting lines from Aubrey de Vere's Mary Tudor:

> "I marked him
> As a far Alp; and loved to watch the sunrise
> Dawn on his ample brow,"

his was a short, swift course, for he died the following year, but how, save by that untimely death, would we have had "In Memoriam," unquestionably the greatest single contribution, outside the Bible, to the literature of the immortal life? Frederick W. Robertson, one of England's rarest prophet-preachers in Tennyson's century, went so far as to say: "To my mind and heart the most satisfactory things

that have been ever said on the future state are contained in this poem."

Somersby, where the poet was born, and where his boyhood was spent, is in the east of England, not far from the German Ocean. It is in the county of Lincolnshire, the chief city of which is Lincoln, famed for its cathedral, the stately towers of which may be seen for forty miles. There has long been a notion that Lincolnshire is dull and uninteresting, much of the land of this section of England having been at some early period inundated by the sea, and in more recent years, like so much of Holland, recovered from it. Henry the Eighth called the county "one of the most brute and beestilie of the whole realm," and there was some ground for such a judgment, for in his day the work of reclamation of the lands by drainage had not been begun. Modern writers, like Hawthorne and Ruskin, concur in the opinion of another king, George the Third, that "it was all flats, fogs, and fens." Most of the county is undoubtedly more level than other parts of England, yet not all of the county is flat. There are here and there wooded hills, which rise out of deep valleys, and everywhere scenes of pastoral beauty. Charles Kingsley, who knew this fen-country as few men, wrote of it

with enthusiasm. It is not an unattractive part of England. Somersby and the region round about are full of charm. Almost the opening paragraph of Hallam Tennyson's worthy biography of his distinguished father reads: "Halfway between Horncastle and Spilsby, in a land of quiet villages, large fields, gray hillsides, and noble, tall-towered churches, on the lower slope of a Lincolnshire wold, the pastoral hamlet of Somersby nestles embosomed in trees." How well he knew the place, and how beautifully he described it. Returning from a visit to his father's old home, on one occasion, he told him that the trees had grown up, shutting out the view from the rectory, and that the house itself was beginning to look forlorn and desolate, to which the poet, with a tinge of sadness, answered, "Poor little place!" But it was not that sort of a place a half century before, in those glorious days when "life was young" for the Somersby rector's "seven tall sons."

George Clayton Tennyson, the poet's father, became rector of Somersby in 1807. Previous to his settling here he had married Miss Fytche, the daughter of the vicar of Louth. "My grandfather had no real calling for the ministry of the church," said Hallam

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL, CENTRAL TOWER

Tennyson, "yet he faithfully strove to do his duty." Some modern writers, it would appear from this observation of Lord Tennyson's gifted son, recognize the importance of a "real calling" to the Christian ministry! More than a "mere bent" in that direction is necessary. Dr. Tennyson, from whatever motive he took holy orders, did his work as a parish minister faithfully. He was a versatile man, of great ability, a scholar, knowing well Hebrew and Syriac, and later learning Greek that he might teach his sons. He had a splendid library, and amid the quiet of his study, with long shelves of books looking down upon them, the children of the parsonage gained their early knowledge of books, and read widely of Shakespeare, Milton, Burke, Goldsmith, Rabelais, Sir William Jones, Addison, Swift, Defoe, Cervantes, and Bunyan. Whatever of languages, of literature, of mathematics and natural science, and of the fine arts, the boys learned before going to Cambridge University he taught them. Until recently there resided at Bag-Enderby, which was part of the parish, an old man who was born there in the same year as the poet. He had many reminiscences to relate of his boyhood, and the way he summed up his recollections of Dr. Tennyson was, "The doctor

wur all for reading." He also recollected the Misses Tennyson as "young ladies who were never seen without a book in their hands." Books, a love for them, and a chance to read them, this was a compensating feature of the life in the rectory at Somersby. This man's gifts were not "somewhat thrown away in a country parsonage," as R. F. Horton thinks. He may have been a moody and disappointed man, "daily racked by bitter fancies and tossed about by strong troubles." The knowledge that he had been disinherited—he was the eldest son and heir of a large estate, which was left to the second son—may have poisoned his days, the people among whom he lived may have been uncouth and without manners—the story is told that the rector's coachman even, when chided for not keeping the harness clean, came into the house and, throwing the harness on the floor, angrily cried out, "Clean it yourself then"—but people loved him, the poor especially were fond of him, and by all classes his pastoral oversight was welcomed and much esteemed. He had great tenderness of heart, but not more than the wife and mother of the parsonage, to whom it is said the boys of a neighboring village used to bring their dogs and beat them in order to be bribed to leave

off, or to induce her to buy them. Dr. Tennyson's social powers were famous throughout the country. The tradition long lingered among the old barristers that, as young men, when they came to Spilsby to attend court, they always tried to persuade him to join with them because of his geniality and brilliant conversation. He was always reading, and when going alone for a walk would take a book with him. "One day in the winter, the snow being deep, he did not hear the Louth mail coming up behind him. Suddenly 'Ho! ho!' from the coachman roused him. He looked up, and found a horse's nose and eyes above his shoulder as if reading the book. He stood six feet two, and was strong and energetic. Tim Green, the Somersby rat-catcher, a great ally of the young Tennysons, said, 'I remember the oud doctor. What a clip he used to goa betweean the chooörches o' Somersby an' Enderby!' " Ah! how many a parson riding his circuit has found a ready excuse for haste, even on the Lord's Day!

Tennyson's mother was a beautiful woman. "When she was almost eighty, a daughter, under cover of her deafness, ventured to mention the number of offers of marriage which had been made to her mother, naming twenty-four. Suddenly, to the amusement of all

present, the old lady said emphatically, and quite simply, as for truth's sake, 'No, my dear, twenty-five.' She had a great sense of humor, which made her room a paradise for the children. They inherited her love of animals and her pity 'for all wounded wings.' " Her children, to whom she gave herself completely, gave her measureless love and reverence always. Lord Tennyson, in his early poem "Isabel," draws a portrait of her:

"Eyes not down-dropt nor overbright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit; locks not widespread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.
The world hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity."

When she died, in 1865, in her eighty-fifth year, the poet wrote in his diary after the funeral, "All has gone off very quietly. A funeral came before us and a funeral followed.

I could have wished for the country churchyard." His thoughts turned to Somersby that sad hour, where a generation before his father had been laid to rest, as often during the intervening years they had reverted to the quiet place, for he was thinking of it when he wrote:

> "Our father's dust is left alone
> And silent under other snows:
> There in due time the woodbine blows,
> The violet comes, but we are gone."

There was a happy household in the Somersby parsonage. But first let George G. Napier describe the house, as he does in his "Homes and Haunts of Tennyson": "The main entrance—what Tennyson calls 'my father's door'—is on the side facing the road, but the house as thus approached is not seen to advantage. When, however, it is viewed from the south, where the creepers clamber up the yellow-washed walls, it looks so sweet one does not wonder at the regrets the poet had in leaving such a picturesque home. The classic lawn, the scene of so many gatherings, slopes gently away to a little garden, quaint and old-fashioned, intersected with walks of turf and girt with high evergreen hedges. In this secluded spot no sounds fall on the ear but those which belong essentially to the pure country—

the ripple of the brook murmuring in its summer sleep, the lowing of 'the white kine,' the bleating of 'the thick-fleeced sheep,' or the cooing in the distant woods 'of the day-long-murmuring woodpigeon.' The trees add greatly to the beauty of the place, many of the poet's favorites, such as the elms and beeches, still spreading their canopy of leaves over the verdure underneath; but alas! the 'towering sycamore' and 'the poplars four' will be no more seen. When Walter White visited Somersby, in 1860, he found only three poplars waving behind the house, as one had disappeared; now all are gone—in Mr. Rawnsley's choice language, 'they only whisper in the Laureate's song.'

"As for the interior of the old manor-house, it may be said to have all the peculiar charm of an English country home. The ivy-mantled door opens on a square hall, adorned with many tokens of the chase, crossing which we enter the drawing-room, rich with pictures, china, and a wealth of bric-a-brac. It is charmingly sunny, being lit with two large windows on a level with the lawn, and for cheerfulness is quite a contrast to a somewhat dingy room on the opposite side of the passage, which must have been associated with sad

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL, CHOIR, LOOKING EAST

SOMERSBY RECTORY

memories, as in it Dr. Tennyson died. Passing along a dimly lighted corridor, a pointed Gothic door opens on the dining hall. This apartment is one of stately dimensions, having been designed by the rector himself, who to his many other accomplishments added a thorough knowledge of architecture, the groined roof and high ecclesiastical windows, the beautifully modeled mantelpiece, and carved paneled door all attesting his refined and excellent taste. To this hall Tennyson makes reference in 'In Memoriam' as that in which the family were wont to gather on festive occasions, and, doubtless, its old walls full many a time 'with harp and carol rang,' more especially at Christmas, when the poet and his brothers came down from Cambridge, accompanied by some of their college friends, to spend the vacation at Somersby:

> 'As in the winters left behind,
> Again our ancient games had place,
> The mimic picture's breathing grace,
> And dance and song and hoodman-blind.'

Such scenes of mirth and merrymaking were not always suited to the poet's habits of solitude—manifest even at this early age—and oftener than elsewhere was he to be found alone with his books in his study in the attic.

A private stair, rather dark and difficult to climb, leads up to it from the ground floor; but the sanctuary of the Muse is strangely altered, and the lines the poet addressed to it—

> 'O darling room, my heart's delight,
> Dear room, the apple of my sight,
> . . . . . .
> No little room so warm and bright,
> Wherein to read, wherein to write'—

would hardly describe it now, as the books which lined the walls and gave to it such a cheerful look have been superseded by 'Lincolnshire pictures.' The skylight has been closed in, and now only one window in the gable wall greets the day, the view from it embracing a wide prospect over the wolds.

"Our chief interest, however, centers in the room in which the poet was born. It is over the drawing-room, and is distinguishable by the iron balcony in front of its windows, but the aspect of the interior is greatly changed, owing to the furniture being altogether different from that of eighty years ago. Standing in this room, our thoughts naturally travel back over the years to that memorable day when the roofs above heard the poet's 'earliest cry.' Somersby would then be at its loveliest, for the Laureate was born on what Charles Lamb

would call 'an all-day day' in August, that charming month when summer, falling into the lap of autumn, 'gilds the glebe of England.' Little would his parents think that to their house had just been born an 'heir of endless fame,' yet it was so."

Other children came into this country parsonage, ten in all, six sons and four daughters, "most of them more or less true poets," "a nest of nightingales" some one styled the household. Frederick, the eldest, who had been born at Louth, published three volumes of poetry, "Days and Hours," "The Isles of Greece," and "Daphne." Three other sons, Edward, Septimus, and Horatio, the youngest, wrote verses which would have received much greater consideration had there not been other more remarkable verse-makers in the family. Charles, a year older than the best known of the brothers, the only one who followed in his father's steps and became a clergyman, and who, like his father, spent his life in a country parish, when at Cambridge wrote such decidedly good poetry that he won the approval of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and later in life, when vicar of Grasby, wrote many beautiful sonnets, in all of which, as in Keble's poems, there breathes a "Saviour-tone of love."

The rector of Somersby was greatly blessed in his family, and the sons and daughters of that rectory wonderfully blessed the world. There has long been a slander abroad that parsonage children do not turn out well. As far back as the middle of the seventeenth century, when Thomas Fuller wrote his "History of the Worthies of England," he took notice of it. "There goeth a common report," he says, "no less uncharitable than untrue, yet meeting with many believers thereof, as if clergymen's sons were generally unfortunate, like the sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas, dissolute in their lives and doleful in their deaths." It has been repeated many times since his day, and by many people, and loses nothing of its uncharitableness or untruthfulness in the repetition. And no matter what one may say in disproof the lusty snake will still crawl its slimy way through the land. The fact is the parsonages of Christian countries have made a larger contribution of genius, ability, skill to the progress of the world than any other class of homes. So large, indeed, has been this contribution of our *country* parsonages, for example, that the author of a book concerning the clergy of a certain county in Connecticut, speaking of their children, says: "I have no

ROOM IN WHICH TENNYSON WAS BORN

ROAD PASSING SOMERSBY RECTORY

doubt that if all the facts could be properly collected and presented, so that all might know what the world owes to the children of ministers, the public would be glad to pay the life salaries of country ministers for the sake of this product alone, and that great philanthropists would be eager to provide the means for educating the children of all country pastors." "It is possible, however," he adds, "that in this way clerical life would be made so much easier and more luxurious that the family fiber would be weakened and deteriorate in quality." And this *is* quite possible. Among the parsonage children of that celebrated county were the six ministerial sons of Dr. Lyman Beecher, including Thomas K. Beecher and Henry Ward Beecher, and a daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, who achieved no less distinction and won as large an immortality. "She has done more for humanity," said Lord Cockburn, "than was ever before accomplished by any single book of fiction." Charlotte Brontë likewise was born in a country parsonage and married a country minister. Frances Havergal's father was the rector of a small parish in Astley, in Worcestershire. "And," interjects the Lady, with characteristic enthusiasm, "don't forget Jane Austen, or Dinah Mulock,

or Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, or Elizabeth Payson Prentiss. And when you are telling about the daughters of the manse you surely ought to mention Abigail Adams, the wife of the second President of the United States, and Abigail Fillmore, and you mustn't leave out of the list Anna Cairns, or Sarah Porter, or Mary Wooley, who have done so much for the education of girls, or Rudyard Kipling's mother, who was born in a Staffordshire parsonage, or Robert Moffat's daughter, who married David Livingstone, or the many other heroines who have gone to the rescue of women in heathen lands, or—," but just at this point I interrupted her with the perfectly natural observation that there are some sons of the parsonage, a few at least, who have won fame. And among those I named were Lowell and Parkman, and Bancroft, and Holmes, and Emerson —a very respectable group, by the way. "But," she objected, "they were the sons of city ministers," which was true. Well, then being put to it, I told her of Joseph Addison, whose father was rector of Milson, the living being worth only one hundred and twenty pounds a year; Louis Agassiz, who was born in the village of Motier, on the Lake of Morat, in Switzerland, as the tablet above the par-

sonage door records; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose father was a Church of England country parson, as were also William Cowper's, and Richard Blackmore's, and Dean Stanley's, and Sir Joshua Reynolds's. And I told her further that quite as formidable an American list could be given, and that it would include such distinguished names as John Hancock, first signer of the Declaration of Independence; Jonathan Edwards, preacher and theologian; Nathaniel Greene, of Revolutionary fame; Mark Hopkins, educator; John B. Gordon, soldier and statesman; Henry Clay, born at "The Slashes," a country community in Virginia, where his father was a Baptist preacher; Justice Brewer, Senator Dolliver, Justice Hughes, and Richard Watson Gilder, editor and poet, and a whole host of bankers, statesmen, preachers, lawyers, physicians, philanthropists, less well known, perhaps, but not less worthy. No, it's not true that the children of our parsonages "turn out bad," at least, it would not seem so, for time would fail one to tell of the innumerable company of parsonage children who have come to worthy fame, or, working in less conspicuous ways, have done equal honor to their parentage.

Why should it be thought surprising that the

parsonages of a nation prove "to be a soil so prolific of learning and virtue and patriotic devotion"? Where else is there a type of domestic life more favorable to the growth of noble ideals and worthy purposes? Where is the religious life more exalted? Where are the Holy Scriptures more faithfully read? Amid what surroundings, what influences, what examples of self-sacrifice could children be better taught? Look at that Somersby rectory, which was home and school and church all in one. The father was parent, teacher, and priest; the mother was an unfailing source of sympathy, love, inspiration and aspiration, and the children increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. In one of the books of Lord Tennyson's childhood, his son found an unfinished prayer, written in a very boyish hand, beginning: "O Lord God Almighty, high above all height, Omniscient and Omnipresent, Whose lifetime is eternity, wilt Thou condescend to behold from the throne of Thy inexpressible Majesty the work of Thine own Hands kneeling before Thee? Thou art the God of Heaven and of Earth. Thou hast created the immeasurable sea. Thou hast laid the foundations of the world that it should not be moved for ever. Thou givest and Thou

SOMERSBY CHURCH

BAG-ENDERBY CHURCH

takest life, Thou destroyest and Thou renewest. Blessed be Thy name for ever and ever," and concluding with an appeal for pity to Christ—"Who did leave the right hand of the Father to endure the agonies of the crown of thorns," and "of the cross." The religious influences of that Somersby home were always potent in his life and in his work, for he was not only a Christian poet—Stopford Brooke calls him "distinctly Christian"—but he was ever a religious poet. Much of the time he was essentially a preacher. With his knowledge of and love for the Bible which he had gained at home he could hardly do otherwise than preach religion. His writings are literally saturated with the Scriptures. There are in them more than three hundred direct references to the Bible. His letters are full of scriptural passages and allusions. When he was sick he talked about the book of Job, which he considered one of the greatest of books, and then asked for Saint John, the "little-children-love-one-another" passage, and the Sermon on the Mount. As he approached death he read from Job and then from Saint Matthew's Gospel. "That my father was a student of the Bible," this is his son's testimony, "those who have read 'In Memoriam'

know. He hoped that the Bible would be more and more studied by all ranks of people, and expounded simply by their teachers, for he maintained that the religion of people could never be founded on mere moral philosophy, and that it could come home to them only in the simple, noble thoughts and facts of a Scripture like ours." Holiness of life he regarded as the goal of every man. A friend tells how once when walking with him over the blooming heath above Haslemere they were speaking of the problems of life, and he ventured to say that he thought education was the key to much that was perplexing. Tennyson assented, stood for a moment in thought, and then broke out into the lines, then unpublished:

> "God let the house of a beast to the soul of a man;
> Said the man, 'Am I your debtor?'
> 'No,' said the Lord—'make it clean if you can,
> And then I'll give you a better.' "

He believed in God profoundly—in a living, loving God. Once when he was wandering with his son through Westminster Abbey, and they had climbed up into the chantry, and the sound of the organ and the voices of the choristers rolling through the vast spaces came to their ears, Tennyson exclaimed, with much feeling, "It is

beautiful, but what empty and awful mockery if there were no God!" He believed in a divine, beneficent providence, in the efficacy of prayer, and in immortality.

There is a picture which Tennyson draws with exquisite skill and finest feeling, and which is regarded as among the most beautiful passages in literature dealing with the mystery of death, and at the same time showing with attractiveness the happiness of an unquestioning faith in Him who alone of men has solved the riddle and knows the answer. It is that description of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, after Jesus had restored her brother to her, beginning:

> "Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
> No other thought her mind admits
> But, he was dead, and there he sits,
> And He who brought him back is there."

Yet I have not thought to make this a study of Tennyson as a religious poet, but rather to suggest the significance of the home influences and surroundings in the fashioning of his life and in the determining of the nature and value of his writings. All his life Tennyson was devotedly attached to the place where he spent the early and formative years of his notable life. Once, when returning from a tour in

Switzerland, he received some Somersby violets from the little daughter of the patron of his father's living, and he wrote the child's mother from a heart which had been deeply stirred by the fragrant blossoms: "Nothing could be sweeter than Cathy's Somersby violets, and doubt not but that I shall keep them as a sacred treasure. The violets of one's own native place, gathered by the hands of a pure, innocent child, must needs be precious to me, and, indeed, I would have acknowledged the receipt of them and sent her a thousand loves and kisses before now, but there were several reasons why I did not write, which it is of no use troubling you with; only I pray you kiss her for me very sweetly on lip and cheek and forehead, and assure her of my gratitude. I love all children, but I loved little Cathy par excellence by a kind of instinct when I saw her first."

He did not visit Somersby for many years toward the close of his life—there were reasons for this—and it has been broadly hinted that he had lost interest in his native district, but Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, his lifelong friend, says that in those last years he talked much of his boyhood days in the country rectory, and Tennyson's brother

remarked that the man who wrote "Tears, Idle Tears," could never forget Somersby. Read these lines and form your own opinion:

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

In 1874 Tennyson received a letter from a Somersby lad, the son of an old Somersby bricklayer, and himself a bricklayer, who had crossed the Atlantic years before and was living in Missouri. He was about the poet's age, and his frank, cordial letter concerning the early Somersby home of the Tennysons, where

his father and he had worked for "the good Doctor," greatly interested and delighted Lord Tennyson. "I can just now see the apple trees that bore such fine yellow apples," the boyhood acquaintance wrote, "the broad lawn where some boys, whom I wot of, used to astonish me by coming out on with those wondrous gauze helmets and long foils, and I was afraid mischief would be done. You were not very broad-shouldered then, I remember. Do you remember the Siberian crab tree down the garden, the old Scotch firs at the house-end where the rooks used to build, and those tiny bantams that made their home over the oven, and the handsome cock who was burned to death? I remember one Good Friday we were working for the Doctor. I see him coming, and hear him saying, 'Atkinson, you must leave work and go to church,' and I remember he preached from 'As Moses lifted up the serpent,' the first time I had ever heard it as a text, and that is near fifty years ago. Ah, sir! perhaps no man in America knows as well as I where you first heard the wrens twitter, the blackbirds, thrushes, the robins sing."

Many of his poems were inspired by scenes and incidents connected with Somersby, and the Somersby atmosphere is felt in all his

ENTRANCE COURT KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

TOWERS OF THE CHAPEL OF KING'S COLLEGE

poems. The beautiful parish church enters into several of them, and one entitled "The Two Voices" describes a scene which the poet must have frequently witnessed as his father's parishioners assembled for worship. It was in a Lincolnshire lane, at five in the morning, "between blooming hedges," that this song of the sea was written:

"Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

"O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay.

"And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

"Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me."

His love for the sea was always strong. From boyhood he had a passion for it, and "especially for the North Sea in wild weather—

'The hollow ocean ridges roaring into cataracts;'

and for the glorious sunsets over the flats—

'The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh.'"

His parents took their holidays by the seaside, and the cottage to which the family resorted was close under the sea bank, "the long low line of tussocked dunes." "I used to stand on this sand-built ridge," the poet said, "and think that it was the spine-bone of the world." "From the top of this, the immense sweep of marsh inland and the whole weird strangeness of the place greatly moved him." His delight in the sea comes out in such poems as "Enoch Arden," "Ulysses," "The Revenge," "The Voyage," "The Sailor Boy," "Sea Dreams," "Maud," and "Crossing the Bar." On the other hand, " 'The May Queen' is all Lincolnshire inland, as 'Locksley Hall' is its seaboard." Some years ago an American student of Tennyson wrote to the present rector of Somersby to ask what hamlets were referred to in the poem which tells of the poet's hearing the Christmas bells ringing from four of the neighboring churches:

"The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

"Four voices of four hamlets round
From far and near, on mead and moor
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound."

When inquiry was made of Tennyson he had forgotten, but thought there could be no doubt that one of the four was Bag-Enderby, which is only a half mile distant from Somersby, and a part of the parish.

Edward FitzGerald, who was an intimate friend of Tennyson for many beautiful years, said more than once that the poet never should have left Lincolnshire, "where there were not only such good seas, but also such fine hill and dale among 'The Wolds' which he was brought up in, as people in general scarce thought on." But there was no alternative. His father had died in 1831, and for six years the family had been allowed to continue in the rectory. During this period sorrow upon sorrow came upon them. Arthur Hallam, the poet's dearest friend, and the accepted lover of his sister, died suddenly in Vienna in 1833. There were anxieties as to resources and the like, and then came the departure from Somersby in 1837. How keenly the poet felt the going away may be seen from the verses he wrote about this time. "One can picture him ascending the hill behind the house, and taking a last look at the familiar landscape, or straying down the garden walks and calling back to memory the time when he first heard a voice speaking

to him in the wind, and his earliest attempts at poetry, when his brother Charles put a slate into his hand and asked him to write something about the flowers in the garden. But now, alas!

'Unwatch'd the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

'Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air.'

Nor is the little brook which runs at the foot of the garden, and which occurs so often in his poems, forgotten in these musings, and, hearing, perhaps, its sounds, he continues:

'Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;
. . . . . .
'Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child.' "

He was at this time engaged to dear Emily Sellwood, but his financial condition would not permit them to marry, and it was not until

CLEVEDON CHURCH

POET'S CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

more than twelve years had passed that his income was sufficient to warrant the establishing of a new home with her, to whom in the dedication of "Enoch Arden" he refers as

> "Dear, near and true—no truer Time himself
> Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
> Dearer and nearer."

In a letter which he wrote her the year following the departure from Somersby there is this pretty reference to the old home and never-to-be-forgotten hours there: "I saw from the high road thro' Hagworthingham the tops of the elms on the lawn at Somersby beginning to kindle into green. Do you remember sitting with me there on the iron garden chair one day when I had just come from London? It was earlier in the year than now. I have no reason for asking, except that the morning three years back seems fresh and pleasant; and you were in a silk pelisse, and I think I read some book with you."

It was here at Somersby that he had first met the young woman, then a girl of seventeen, who wore the "silk pelisse." Tennyson was twenty-one—it was in 1830, while he was still at Cambridge, and the year before his father died —and while walking in the Fairy Wood, not far from the parsonage-house, he saw through the

trees, coming toward him, his friend Arthur Hallam walking with a young woman, "slender, beautiful, dressed in gray." From that moment the poet was no longer fancy free. This young woman who took Tennyson captive was Emily Sellwood. It has been remarked as more than a coincidence perhaps that Hallam brought to his friend before he left him the one who was to take his place, to fill the vacant heart, and satisfy the longings which death disappointed. There was no avowal of love for several years, and many more were to elapse before the marriage took place, but twenty years from the time he first saw that gleaming vision in the Fairy Wood he led the bride of his heart to the altar, and as Tennyson said many years later, "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her." This was in June, 1850. "In Memoriam" was published that same month. The poet's fortunes were improving in more senses than one. His home life was wondrously beautiful now. "For five and forty years they lived together in the peace of God. Whenever he was away he wrote a letter-diary to her; whenever he was at home she was his home. From that happy day at Shiplake he was like a mariner who had entered port, like the traveler of his own brilliant

imagination, who had found the happy Isles. The loyalty which waited twenty years was rewarded with the fruition of forty-five." In his last volume the devoted husband-poet included a love-song, which he tried to disguise with the title "June bracken and heather," addressed "To ———":

"There on the top of the down,
The wild heather round me and over me June's high blue,
When I looked at the bracken so bright and the heather so brown,
I thought to myself I would offer this book to you.
This, and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,
With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue heaven,
And a fancy as summer-new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the heather."

Their first home was at Warninglid, Sussex, from which they soon moved to a house in Twickenham, and in 1852 to Farringford, a house on the Isle of Wight, concerning which Mrs. Tennyson wrote in her journal: "This ivied home among the pine trees is ours. Such beautiful blue hyacinths, orchises, primroses, daisies, marsh marigolds, and cuckoo flowers! Wild cherry trees, too, with single snowy blossom, and the hawthorns white with their

pearls of May. The park has for many days been rich with cowslips and furze in bloom. The elms are a golden wreath at the foot of the down, to the north of the house the mespilus and horse chestnut are in flower and the apple trees are covered with rosy buds. A. dug the bed ready for the rhododendrons. A thrush was singing among the nightingales and other birds, as he said, 'mad with joy.' At sunset, the golden green of the trees, the burning splendor of Blackgang Chine and St. Catherine's, and the red bank of the primeval view, contrasted with the turkis blue of the sea (that is our view from the drawing room); make altogether a miracle of beauty. We are glad that Farringford is ours." Here for two-score years they lived together in the peace of God, and here, as the monument to their memory in the quiet churchyard near by reads, their "happiest days were passed."

But throughout his life he was always living over the Somersby days. One who lived with him bears witness that "he always spoke of Somersby with an affectionate remembrance; of the woodbine that climbed into the bay window of his nursery; of the Gothic-vaulted dining-room with stained-glass windows, making, as my uncle Charles Turner used to say,

STOCKWORTH MILL

FARRINGFORD

'butterfly souls' on the walls; of the beautiful stone chimney-piece carved by his father; of the pleasant little drawing-room lined with bookshelves, and furnished with yellow curtains, sofas and chairs, and looking out on the lawn. This lawn was overshadowed on one side by wych-elms, and on the other by larch and sycamore trees. Here, my father said, he made his early song, 'A spirit haunts the year's last hours.' Beyond the path, bounding the green sward to the south, ran in the old days a deep border of lilies and roses, backed by hollyhocks and sunflowers. Beyond that was

> 'A garden bower'd close
> With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
> Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
> Or opening upon level plots
> Of crowned lilies, standing near
> Purple-spiked lavender'—

sloping in a gradual descent to the parson's field, at the foot of which flows, by 'lawn and lea,' the swift, steep-banked brook, where are 'brambley wildernesses' and 'sweet forget-me-nots,' and in which the 'long mosses sway.' The charm and beauty of this brook,

> 'That loves
> To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
> Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,

> And swerves to left and right thro' meadowy curves
> That feed the mothers of the flock,'

haunted him through life. Near Somersby the stream joins another from Holywell, and their confluence may be referred to in the lines:

> 'By that old bridge, which, half in ruins then,
> Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
> Beyond it, where the waters marry.'

" 'Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea' was the poem more especially dedicated to the Somersby stream, and not, as some have supposed, 'The Brook,' which is designed to be a brook of the imagination.

"The orchard on the right of the lawn forms a sunny little spot that awoke in his mind pleasant memories. 'How often,' he said, 'have I risen in the early dawn to see the golden globes lying in the dewy grass among those apple trees.' He delighted, too, to recall the rare richness of the bowery lanes; the ancient Norman cross standing in the churchyard, close to the door of the quaint little church; the wooded hollow of Holywell; the cold springs flowing from under the sandstone rocks; the flowers, the mosses, and the ferns." Hallam Tennyson adds: "The localities of my father's subject poems are wholly imaginary; although

he has done for mid-Lincolnshire scenery what Virgil did for Mantua, yet his early surroundings certainly did give color to his early and later work." None the less pilgrims to Somersby will continue to relate some of Tennyson's poems to particular places in that region. For example, while Tennyson himself says that the mill of which he wrote in "The Miller's Daughter" was no particular mill, more than one visitor to Somersby has felt certain that it was a mill not far from Tennyson's early home which gave him his first suggestion of the subject, for, as Napier says, while the poem was probably written at Cambridge, there are several touches in it, such as the reference to the wolds and the white chalk quarry, which seem to indicate that, consciously or unconsciously, the haunts of his boyhood were present in the poet's mind wherever he wrote it.

"The little stream which runs along the happy valley of Somersby turns the wheels of no less than three mills, and in the poet's youthful days it supplied a fourth with water. This last was almost within a stone's cast of his father's rectory, and here the poet, when a child, would watch

> 'The sleepy pool above the dam,
> The pool beneath it never still.'

This mill has long ago disappeared, and the nearest to Somersby is now that called Stockworth, in the parish of Hagworthingham. As the distance does not exceed two miles, it is not beyond the limits of conjecture, knowing, as we do, that the poet's favorite walk was by the banks of the brook, to imagine that in some of those afternoon strolls, so beautifully described in 'In Memoriam,' he and his friend would often turn their steps hitherward, especially as it is one of the sweetest spots in all the surrounding country."

With this last glimpse of the poet and Arthur Hallam walking arm in arm through the fields and along the grassy banks of the brook we leave Somersby. They had first met at Trinity College, which, with Saint John's and King's, excel all other colleges at Cambridge for beauty of situation. These closely adjoin one another, and their halls and quadrangles, cloisters and chapels, fountains and beautiful pleasure parks, through which under many a bridge the river Cam quietly glides, form as pleasant a retreat for the pursuit of knowledge as is to be found all the world over. Here together they walked and rowed—and loved one another with a love passing that of women. How infinitely pathetic are these lines which

SAINT JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

THE CAM, CAMBRIDGE

SOMERSBY

Tennyson wrote after a visit to the old familiar scenes and to "the rooms in which he dwelt":

"I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random through the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

"And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

"And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

"The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt."

Hallam is buried in a lonely church, near Clevedon, in Somersetshire, not a hundred yards from the sea. Tennyson sleeps his last sleep in a grave in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, below the monument to Chaucer and beside the grave of Robert Browning. Hallam died in the twenty-third year of his age, "too early lost for public fame." Tennyson journeyed a long road to "sunset and evening star" before he "put out to sea," dying at eighty-three, rich in honors and in the affection of men.

EVERSLEY

"Eversley?" replied the station-master at Winchfield to the query of two lone travelers who had stepped from a London and Southwestern train early one summer morning, "Eversley? Oh, that's about five miles, sir." "How can you get there? You'll have to drive, sir." "The price? I think it is six-and-six, sir." We discovered on our return, however, when there was not a moment for argument, if we would catch the train we had planned to take, that the price given was for one way only.

The station-master was still waiting, hat in hand. "Will you 'ave an hopen trap, sir?" he asks, as he starts down the street to the hostelry for the conveyance. "We'd rather ride in an open trap than any other kind of a vehicle," we tell him, and so the journey is made in a "trap," in more senses than one, but that sad story of duplicity must not be permitted to mar for the briefest instant even the memory of a visit to the scene of the labors of Charles Kingsley, preacher, poet, novelist, reformer, naturalist, and parish priest.

EVERSLEY

From the station along a winding road, underneath arching trees, as if through a park, past a mile stone with the inscription "From London 38 miles," we were driven. Soon the sun, which had been hidden all the morning, came out, and the shadows beautifully embroidered on the earth's carpet were golden flowers. We pass through Phenix Green, which is the beginning of Hartley Row, and now we are on the direct route, the old coach road, to London-town. "To Eversley, Blackwater, and London" a sign-post reads, and we follow the pointing finger through the small villages of Hartley Wintney and Hartford Bridge, then leave the main road for a short drive between Lord Calthorpe's estate on the right—"It extends for miles," the driver said—and Sir Anthony Cope's famous estate on the left, where extensive forest fires had then been burning with irreparable damage for three weeks, to Eversley.

"This isn't the place, is it?" asked the Lady, who had long been interested in Charles Kingsley's parish, as we stood in the little churchyard and looked up at the almost diminutive church. "This can't have been his church." But it was. Even then we were standing by his grave. Here in this country church he preached for thirty-

three years, here in this country parish he lived, and here in this churchyard he sleeps,

"A righteous man
Who loved God and truth above all things.
A man of untarnished honor—
Loyal and chivalrous—gentle and strong—
Modest and humble—tender and true—
Pitiful to the weak—yearning after the erring—
Stern to all forms of wrong and oppression,
Yet most stern toward himself—
Who being angry, yet sinned not.
Whose highest virtues were known only
To his wife, his children, his servants, and the poor.
Who lived in the presence of God here,
And passing through the grave and gate of death
Now liveth unto God for evermore."

Charles Kingsley was born in 1819 in a country parsonage in Devonshire, "under the brow of Dartmoor." His father was a clergyman, a man of scholarly tastes and acquirements, having been educated at Harrow and Oxford. And his mother, born in the West Indies, but educated in England, was a woman of remarkable talents. It is told of her that she was keenly alive to the charms of scenery. She believed that all impressions made on her own mind before the birth of her child by the romantic surroundings of her Devonshire home would be transmitted to him, and in this faith she surrendered herself to the enjoyment of

every sight and sound which she hoped would be dear to her child in after life, and her faith and imagination were abundantly rewarded, for Charles Kingsley all his life was a lover of God's beautiful world. A country parish was no hardship to him—far from it. "Village life is so dull," says the man of the town. Kingsley never found it so. He loved the moors, wide stretches of landscape, and particularly the open sea. This love of the sea he acquired in boyhood, his father, when Charles was eleven, having been presented to the rectory of Clovelly, "decidedly the quaintest and perhaps the most beautiful village in all England," on the southwest coast, just where the coast line begins to sweep down toward Land's End. That is an unusually graphic description which Dickens gives in his "A Message from the Sea" of the wonderful little village, rising cottage above cottage along the single street, or stairway, which ascends sharply from out the sea. In more recent years artists and writers have made better known the beauties of the unique place, which Kingsley late in life declared to be of all the places at home and abroad the one he most admired. Tennyson thought it one of the most beautiful places he had ever seen. It was here in Clovelly that "a

new education began for Kingsley; a new world was revealed to him," and here as nowhere else the mystery, romance, and power of the sea laid hold upon his imagination. The life at Clovelly influenced his entire career. His well-known song of "The Three Fishers" was born of his Clovelly experiences. There were boyhood scenes which were ever rising before him, such as, for example, the oft-repeated sight, when, as the herring fleet was about to put to sea, his father would take him to the quay, where this faithful pastor of souls would hold a short parting service with the fearless men and the weeping women, all joining in singing with the fervor of those "who have death and danger staring them in the face" the one hundred and twenty-first psalm, which has long been known as the "Traveler's Psalm," which Livingstone read to his family before he left for Africa, and which many others have been accustomed to use before setting out upon a journey:

"Up to those bright and gladsome hills,
Whence flows my weal and mirth,
I look and sigh for Him who fills
Unseen both heaven and earth."

These boyhood days helped to make the chivalric Kingsley. There are some impres-

CLOVELLY: THE MAIN STREET

THE SEA AT CLOVELLY

sions which we never grow away from, and which help to fashion our course to the very end of life's day. Kingsley always loved Clovelly. His wife says that his affection for this fisher-village amounted to a passion. Kingsley himself said that it was the inspiration of his life until he met her. One summer, broken down by his pastoral labors, he spent a month in "his beloved Clovelly," and such rapturous letters as he wrote home! "My room is about twelve feet square, on the first floor, a jessamine and a fuchsia running up the windows. . . . The bay is now curling and writhing in white horses under a smoking southwester, which promises a blessing, as it will drive the mackerel off the Welsh shore, where they now are in countless millions, into our bay; and then fun and food for me and the poor fellows here." "We had a charming trip yesterday to Lundy; started at six, and were five hours going over, the wind being very light; but we went along very pleasantly to a continued succession of Wesleyan hymns, sung in parts most sweetly. . . . Coming back, as the sun set behind the island, great flame-colored sheets of rack flared up into the black sky from off the black line of the island top; and when the sun set the hymns began again,

and we slipped on home, while every ripple of the cutter's bow fell down, and ran along the surface in flakes and sparkles of emerald fire; and then the breeze died, and we crawled under our own huge cliffs, through a *fiery sea*, among the dusky herring boats, for whom and their nets we had to keep strict watch, and landed, still through fire, at half past two in the morning."

But the lad had other teachers than "iron walls of rock," "tiny herring-fleets," and "gray columns of waterspouts, stalking across the waves before the northern gale." His father was his earliest instructor. Later he went to King's College, London, and in the fall of 1838 to Magdalen College, Cambridge. When he was twenty-two God laid his hand upon him in a way which brooked no refusal. For a long time the brilliant student had been struggling with doubts, and had been undetermined as to his life work, but God called him to the ministry, and when the struggle was over Kingsley wrote, under date of June 12: "My birth night. I have been for the last hour on the seashore, not dreaming, but thinking deeply and strongly, and forming determinations which are to affect my destiny through time and through eternity. Before the sleeping earth and the sleepless sea and stars, I

have devoted myself to God; a vow never (if he gives me the faith I pray for) to be recalled." How well Kingsley kept his vow Eversley is his witness!

Kingsley came to Eversley first as curate in 1842. "I hope to be ordained in July," he had written to Fanny St. Leger, to whom he was engaged, "to the curacy of Eversley, in Hampshire. In the midst of lovely scenery—rich, but not exciting. And you will be with me in your thoughts, in my village visits, and my moorland walks, when I am drinking in from man and nature the good and the beautiful, while I purge in my vocation the evil, and raise up the falling and the faint."

Five days after his ordination he began his public ministrations in the Eversley church—which is uninteresting, save that it is Kingsley's church—probably without a thought that he would continue to minister to the people of that simple country parish throughout an entire generation. "I wonder if he had any idea that he would be here so many years?" asked the Lady, as she stood by the altar of the now famous church, and thought of the time when from all over the world men made their way to that out-of-the-way sanctuary to hear Charles Kingsley preach.

This country parish was made up of three small hamlets, "each standing on its own little green, surrounded by the moorland, with young forests of self-sown fir trees cropping up in every direction. The population was scattered —'hethcroppers' from time immemorial and poachers by instinct and heritage." "My parish is peculiar for nothing," writes the village parson, "but want of houses and abundance of peat bogs; my parishioners remarkable only for aversion to education and a predeliction for fat bacon." When Kingsley began his ministry there was not a grown man or woman among the laboring class who could read or write. There was no schoolhouse near, and as for religious instruction, the people had had none. The church was nearly empty, the farmers' sheep were pastured in the churchyard, the alms were collected in a wooden saucer, a cracked basin held the water for baptism, holy communion was celebrated only three times a year. At the altar, covered by a moth-eaten cloth, stood one old broken chair, and so averse were the parish authorities to any change that when Kingsley proposed monthly communions his proposal was accepted only on his promising himself to supply the wine for the celebration, the church war-

MAGDALEN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

KINGSLEY'S COUNTRY PARISH

dens refusing to provide except for the three great festivals. But he was not dismayed. Eversley needed him, and, moreover, a beautiful love was singing in his heart. He makes a sketch of the view from the rectory windows and sends it to the lady of his love. "Can you understand my sketch? I am no drawer of trees, but the view is beautiful. The ground slopes upward from the windows to a sunk fence and road, without banks or hedges, and then rises in the furze hill in the drawing, which hill is perfectly beautiful in light and shade and color. . . . Behind the acacia on the lawn you get the first glimpse of the fir forest and moors, of which five sixths of my parish consist. Those delicious self-sown firs! Every step I wander they whisper to me of you, the delicious past melting into the more delicious future. 'What has been, shall be,' they say."

His influence almost immediately began to be felt, and this, not so much at first from his preaching, ardent and intense as this was, but from his house-to-house visiting during the week. This good man never thought that pastoral visiting was a waste of time. He began to shepherd his flock as soon as he had been made an overseer. "I am going after dinner to read to an old woman of eighty-seven. So

you see I have begun," he writes in one of his earliest letters. To be sure, he was without experience, but this did not deter him. "No clergyman," he confesses, "knows less about the working of a parish than I do; but one thing I do know, that I have to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and to be instant in that, in season and out of season, and at all risks. . . . And therefore I pray daily for the Spirit of love to guide us, and the Spirit of earnestness to keep us at work. For our work must be done by praying for our people, by preaching to them, in church and out of church (for all instruction is preaching)—by leading them to pray and worship in the liturgy, and by setting them an example—an example in every look, word, and motion—in the paying of a bill, the hiring of a servant, the reproving of a child." What a beautiful conception of the pastoral office! Such an ideal was rare in his day. Among other good things, Charles Kingsley taught the clergymen of England that a chief duty of Christ's shepherds is to look after the flock.

In 1844 Kingsley married one whom he had met five years before. "That was my real wedding day," he remarked some fifteen years afterward, so strongly had he been attracted

that July day of 1839. Their life together was always most beautiful, and as the rectory became the center of the parish life, the influence of that happy home was most beneficent in all the region. Perhaps the best description of the rectory as it was in Kingsley's day, and the family life, is given by William Harrison, who married a daughter of the parsonage, and became the rector of Clovelly. "Many, now scattered far and wide, must remember how picturesque the rectory itself was. Even a stranger passing by would have stopped to look at the pleasant ivy-grown house, with its long, sloping dark roofs, its gables, its bow-windows open to sun and air, and its quaint mixture of buildings, old and new. And who among his friends will ever cease to remember the lawn, the glebe land sweeping upward toward the half-cultivated, half-wild copse; through which the hidden path, henceforth forth sacred ground to those who loved him, leads up and out to Hartford Bridge flats? Marked features in the scene to them, and now widely known, were the grand Scotch firs on the lawn, under which on summer evenings I have seen many sweet pictures, and heard many noble words, and the branches of which now wave solemnly above his last resting-place.

"Here, in this beautiful home-scene, and truly ideal English rectory, was the fountain-head, as I certainly think, and as he often said, of all his strength and greatness. Indeed, great as I knew him to be in his books, I found him greater at his own fireside. Home was to him the sweetest, the fairest, and the most romantic thing in life; and there all that was best and brightest in him shone with steady and purest luster.

"I should not venture to speak of this, unless permission had been granted me to do so, feeling that it is the most difficult of tasks to lift the veil from any family life without lowering its sacredness; and that it is wholly beyond my power to preserve in words the living 'sweetness and light' which pervaded his household. That household was indeed a revelation to me, as I know it was to others—so nobly planned and ordered, so earnest in its central depths, so bright upon its surface.

"Of the wonderful love of that home-life I must not, cannot speak. Such things are not for the world. And yet for all who wish to know what Mr. Kingsley really was, what the fashion of his life, and the aims for which he worked, not to know that love for those nearest and dearest to him was the very lever of his

life, the very soul of all his joy, would be to know him all amiss, and lose the very keynote of his being. He has told it all himself to those who have ears to hear in every book he wrote, and to those who knew him well, his every look and every action told the fact yet more emphatically. Some men take pains to conceal their love. It seemed his pride to declare it. How often has he said to me, and I venture to record it because I know he would wish it to be recorded, that whatever he had done or achieved was due to the love that had come to him at a great crisis and to guide and to strengthen and to glorify his life." It was all so beautiful and so wholesome, and withal so like what the sway of every parsonage should be that I am constrained to give the words of a pupil who lived in the home for a considerable period: "I entered his house as his pupil, and was, for nearly a year and a half, his constant companion. He was then in his thirty-first year, in the fullness of his strength; I, a raw, receptive schoolboy of fifteen; so that his mind and character left their impression upon mine as a seal upon wax. He was then, above all things and before all things else, a parish clergyman. His parish work was not indeed so laborious and absorbing as it had

been six years before, when he was first made rector. The efforts of these six years had told, the seed was bearing fruit, and Eversley would never again be as it had been. He had now a curate to help him, and give him the leisure which he needed for writing. Still, even so, with a large and straggling, though not very populous parish, with his share of three services on Sunday and cottage lectures on two week-day evenings in winter, there was much for him to do, throwing himself into it, as he did, with all his intensity and keen sense of responsibi ity. These were the days when farm-laborers in Hampshire got from eight to ten shillings a week, and bread was dear, or had not long ceased to be so. The cholera of 1849 had just swept through the country, and though it had not reached Eversley, a severe kind of low fever had, and there had been a season of much illness and many deaths, during which he had, by his constant, anxious, tender care of the sick poor, won their confidence more than ever before. The poor will not go to the relieving officer if they can get their needs supplied elsewhere; and the Eversley poor used to go for relief, and sometimes more than relief, to the rectory. There were few mornings, at that time, that did not bring some one

in distress, some feeble woman, or ailing child, or a summons to a sick-bed. Up to that time he had allowed no man or woman in his parish to become an inmate of the workhouse through infirmity or old age, except in a few cases where want had been the direct consequence of indolence or crime. At times, too, other poor besides those of his parish might be seen at his door. Gypsies were attracted to him from all the country round. He married and christened many of them, to whom such rites were things almost unknown. I cannot give any description of his daily life, his parish work, which will not sound commonplace. . . . But there never was a man with whom life was less monotonous, with whom it was more full to overflowing of variety and freshness. Nothing could be so exquisitely delightful as a walk with him about his parish. Earth, air, and water, as well as farmhouse and cottage, seemed full of his familiar friends. By day and by night, in fair weather and in storm, grateful for heat and cold, rain and sunshine, light and soothing darkness, he drank in Nature. It seemed as if no bird, or beast, or insect, scarcely a drifting cloud in the sky, passed by him unnoticed, unwelcomed. He caught and noted every breath, every sound, every sign. With every

person he met he instinctively struck some point of contact, found something to appreciate—often, it might be, some information to ask for—which left the other cheered, self-respecting, raised for the moment above himself; and whatever the passing word might be, it was given to high or low, gentle or simple, with an appropriateness, a force, and a genial courtesy, in the case of all women, a deferential courtesy, which threw its spell over all alike, a spell which few could resist."

Kingsley was a lover all his life. He seemed to love everything and everybody. His love for animals was marked, being "deepened by his belief in their having a future state," which he held in common with John Wesley, Agassiz, Bishop Butler, and many other thoughtful men. Dogs were his delight, and Dandy, a friend and companion for thirteen years; Sweep, a black retriever; and Victor, a gift of Queen Victoria, lie buried under the fir trees on the rectory lawn. On the same lawn "dwelt a family of natter jacks (running toads), who lived on from year to year in the same hole, which the scythe was never allowed to approach. He made friends with a pair of sand wasps, one of which he had saved from drowning. They lived in a crack of the window of his dressing-

EVERSLEY CHURCH

INTERIOR EVERSLEY CHURCH

room, and every spring he would look out eagerly for them or their children as they came out of, or returned to the same crack. The little flycatcher, who built its nest every year under his bedroom window, was a constant joy to him. He had a favorite slowworm in the churchyard which parishioners, who thought such creatures were poisonous, were warned not to kill." The only aversion he had was to spiders. Birds were to him, as to Saint Francis, among the marvels of creation. He taught his children to establish friendly relations with bugs, frogs, snakes, and all such creatures, and one day his little girl ran into the house, holding up a peculiarly repulsive looking worm, with the exclamation, "Oh, daddy, look at this *delightful* worm!"

How, too, he loved nature. This was one of the most notable of his characteristics. "He had in him, both as a child of nature and a naturalist, a form of natural religion and a dash of Wordsworthian nature-worship." "Do not study matter," he exhorted his people, "for its own sake, but as the countenance of God!" "Study the sky! Study water! Study trees! Study the sounds and scents of nature!" "Study the form and colors of leaves and flowers, and the growth and habits of plants; not to

classify them, but to admire them and to adore God!"

He was full of tender sentiment. "I send you some flowers," he writes his wife, "gathered yesterday from the ruins of Jervaulx Abbey, dismantled by connivance of Henry VIII. The forget-me-not is from the high altar, the saxifrage from the refectory. To-day I go up to lovely Cover, to fish and dream of you. . . . Really everyone's kindness here is extreme after the stiff South. The richest spot, it is said, in all England is this beautiful oasis in the mountains. Kiss baby for me. . . ." "Didn't he say, too," asked the Lady, who was much touched by that reference to the forget-me-nots, when we were riding back to the station, "'Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful. Beauty is God's handwriting, a wayside sacrament. Thank him for it, the fountain of all loveliness, and drink it in, a cup of blessing'?"

Kingsley did not have many extensive vacations. He kept himself in health and vigor by long walks, and now and again a half day's fishing in a nearby stream. He was an ardent fisherman, and his joy when he took his first salmon (he was forty-one at the time) was unbounded. "I have done the deed at last—

killed a real, actual, live salmon, over five pounds weight," he writes. "There is nothing like it; the excitement is maddening." And what respect he had for anyone who was master of the art! Take this passage from a letter to his dear friend, Tom Hughes, which shows his generous appreciation of an angler's skill: "A party with doubtful h's, and a commercial demeanor, appears on Wednesday on our little stream, and kills awfully. Throws a beautiful line, and catches more than I have in a day for this two years here; fly, a little green-drake, with a ridiculous tufted bright yellow wing, like nothing as ever was. Stood aghast; went home and dreamed all the spiders' webs by the stream were full of them." When he could command the time, or particularly felt the necessity of the recreation, he went on a fishing excursion for a few days, and his periods of recreation were almost invariably productive of mental fruits as well. His "Chalk Stream Studies," especially dear to fishermen, were the product of a few days' fishing at Newbury. But now and again he was able to take a real holiday, and these were occasions of unfeigned delight. Almost more than anyone I know, Kingsley literally reveled in new scenes and bubbled over with enthusiasm over new ex-

periences. He never became surfeited with travel, was never blasé, his pleasure was never commonplace. Everywhere in God's world were "wonders," and every fresh vision of beauty was marvelous in his eyes. In 1856 he and Tom Hughes decided to make an excursion into Wales, Kingsley's invitation being in verse, beginning,—

"Come away with me, Tom,
Term and talk is done;
My poor lads are reaping,
Busy every one.
Curates mind the parish,
Sweepers mind the court,
We'll away to Snowdon
For our ten days' sport,"

and containing the following rarely beautiful lines, known and loved by everyone who has any knowledge whatever of Kingsley:

"Do the work that's nearest,
Though it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when we meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles;
See in every hedgerow
Marks of angel's feet,
Epics in each pebble
Underneath our feet."

And there in Wales he did find glory and song as everywhere. "A glorious day, Snowdonia magnificent"; "The glory was what I never

saw before, all those grand mountains, 'silver-veined with rills'; cataracts of snow-white cotton threads, if you will, zigzagging down every rock face—sometimes a thousand feet—and the whole air alive with the roar of waters"; "I have had, as far as scenery is concerned, the finest day I ever had";—his letters to his wife at this time are filled with such exuberant sentences as these. In 1862 he went with Mrs. Kingsley and his eldest son to Scotland for a month's holiday, and as always he made largest demands upon his vocabulary to express his sense of joy. "The loveliest spot I ever saw," he tells his mother. "We had the grandest drive yesterday through Glencove, from Loch Lomond at Tarby to Inverary around the head of Loch Fyne." From the south of France he writes: "I never saw a finer sea," "flowers wonderful," "the Spanish mountains are covered with snow, and look magnificent," "a new and most beautiful and curious zoophite, ditto seaweed," "there are the most lovely sweet-smelling purple pinks on the rocks here, and the woods are full of asphodel, great lilies, four feet high, with white and purple flowers," "a place, which for beauty, beats everything I ever saw"; "Three days in the Pyrenees! What I have seen I cannot tell you. Things unspeakable and

full of glory"; "It is all like a pleasant dream. If I had but you and Rose to show it to"; "Such a day I never had in my life of beauty and wonder . . . and yet there is one thing more glorious and precious than the whole material universe—and that is a woman's love." And this explains better than anything which might be said why the world was so beautiful to Kingsley, why every new thing was more wonderful than any previously seen, why every new day was better and holier than any which had gone before, why life to him was "from glory to glory," why he loved Eversley and its simple folks, why he challenged the world in behalf of the poor and oppressed everywhere, why he said his say, when he knew he courted thereby personal loss, contumely, distrust, and a whole train of evils, undeserved and painful to his sensitive nature. The world to him was love.

And Kingsley loved men with a veritable passion. He was a brother of all men. Every soul in peril or distress was his care; every slave was his concern; every man oppressed by sin or society was his charge. "I will never believe," he cries almost impatiently, "that a man has a real love for the good and the beautiful except he attacks the evil and the disgusting the

moment he sees it. It is very easy for us to turn our eyes away from ugly sights and so consider ourselves refined. The refined man to me is he who cannot rest in peace with a coal mine, or a factory, or a Dorsetshire peasant's house near him in the state in which they are." His feelings for the poor are seen in the pages of "Yeast." His first curate has told of Kingsley's *respect* for the poor. He said he could think of no other word to characterize his attitude. "It was not simply that he cared for them exceedingly, was kind, feeling, sympathetic, and would take any amount of trouble for them, that those whom he employed became simply devoted to him. It was far more than this. There was in him a delicate, deep respect for the poor—a positive looking up to them, for His dear sake who 'became poor'; for the good which he saw in them, for the still greater good which he hoped to see and strove that he might see in them."

In a striking passage in one of the papers which Kingsley wrote for "Politics of the People," the subject of the paper being "The British Museum," which he called a "true, equalizing place in the deepest and most spiritual sense," he says: "I never felt this more strongly than some six months ago, as I was looking in at the

windows of a splendid curiosity shop in Oxford Street, at a case of humming-birds. I was gloating over the beauty of these feathered jewels, and then wondering what was the meaning, what was the use of it all. . . . Next me stood a huge, brawny coalheaver, in his shovel-hat and white stocks and highlows, gazing at the humming-birds as earnestly as myself. As I turned he turned, and I saw a bright, manly face, with a broad, soot-grimed forehead, from under which a pair of keen flashing eyes gleamed wondering, smiling sympathy into mine. In that moment we felt ourselves to be friends. . . . I never felt more thoroughly than at that minute (though, thank God, I had often felt it before) that all men were brothers; that fraternity and equality were not mere political doctrines, but blessed, God-ordained facts; that the party walls of rank and fashion and money were but a paper prison of our own making, which we might break through any moment by a single hearty and kindly feeling; that the one Spirit of God was given without respect of persons; that the beautiful things were beautiful alike to the coalheaver and the parson; and that before the wondrous works of God, and of God-inspired genius, the rich and the poor might meet together, and feel that

whatever the coat or the creed may be, 'A man's a man for a' that,' and one Lord the maker of them all."

It was his love for mankind which made Kingsley the chivalric preacher which he was to his generation. One who heard him in Chester Cathedral said of him that when he entered the pulpit, somehow from the simple carriage of himself, from every restrained and slightest gesture, from every stronger or shyer cadence, from the words which he said and the the earnest, self-abandoning, strong, joyful way in which he said them, there came upon you the impression that here was a man who in all best senses was a true knight-errant, a man who had yielded to God and duty not a few of his abilities but his whole manhood, and who had an utter personal rejoicing both in the consecration itself and in all sides of that ministry which for him the consecration meant.

The quietest, the gentlest of men in his home, Kingsley was a militant parson all his life. He was what Whittier called Bunyan, the "fighting Great-Heart." He had the soldier spirit as well as soldier blood. At one time he thought of choosing the army as a profession. Singularly tender and affectionate in his friendships, he was a kind of "northeaster" in his at-

titude toward the world. He "lived in a storm and thought in a storm," like Elijah. He hated sham and affectation. "Don't cant, Elizabeth," he said to a housemaid, when he was but six years old. Thus it was all through his life. In particular he loathed "the dapper young-lady preachers," whose chief business seemed to be to assist at garden parties. Kingsley was a fighter, a kind of spiritual frontiersman. When he was dying, he was heard to murmur, "No more fighting, no more fighting." It was said of him that when once fairly let loose upon his prey, "all the Red Indian within him came to the surface, and he wielded his tomahawk with an unbaptized heartiness." When one knows the England of Kingsley's day, this will not surprise him. There are times when only a belligerent, gladiatorial sort of a preacher will dominate the situation. Slavery made the Quaker poet Whittier a high priest of violence and war. The oppression of the poor in England drove Kingsley to passionate vehemence and tempestuous aggression. When he cried "Repent" it was with rugged eloquence, like that of John the Baptist. There was no mouthing of words, he would be understood; no shamefacedness of manner, why should he apologize? no concealment of the sword of

CHESTER CATHEDRAL

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

retribution, the wicked and the oppressor must be warned of their fate! He might be forbidden to preach again in London, as he was, though the inhibition was afterward withdrawn, but he would cry aloud and spare not! One reason he was not in sympathy with the Oxford group, Newman, Pusey, Keble, and others—his controversy with Newman was particularly unfortunate—he thought them lacking in virility. He was a priest, he loved the church as did they, but with such appalling conditions as those by which the church and society were confronted at that time, there was an urgent need, not for introspection, meditation, the study of primitive church and all that sort of thing, but for quick, wise action, and Kingsley was essentially a man of action.

In 1848 there were political events which shook all Europe. Barricades were put up in the streets of Milan, Paris, and Berlin. Every throne in Europe was tottering. There had been ten years of agitation in England, the demand for the Charter having been formulated in 1838. The forces of revolt threatened to overthrow all authority. It did not seem to Kingsley as if this were exactly the time to revise the Prayer Book; he preferred to search the Book of Amos for guidance in the stern work at hand, for it

began to look as if London would witness scenes of violence like other European cities. A monster petition, "escorted by a hundred thousand determined men from Kensington to Westminster," was to be presented, and Kingsley hurried from his country parish to London to see if something could not be done to avert bloodshed. The dear, brave country preacher was but twenty-nine years of age at the time. Eversley was his parish, but the starving poor of England were his concern. No man has other limitations upon his activities than his own heart. The field is the world, said Jesus. There is no East, no West, no home field, no foreign field, no country parish, no city parish to that minister who, like his Master, carries the world on his heart. Wherever stationed, he is at the center:

> "Where our duty's task is wrought
> In unison with God's great thought,
> The near and future blend in one."

The moment Kingsley reached London, he found himself with Maurice in the midst of the fray, and Kingsley, as if inspired, wrote his famous placard address to the Workingmen of England, beginning: "You say that you are wronged. Many of you are wronged; and many besides yourselves know it. Almost all

men who have heads and hearts know it—above all the working clergy know it. They go into your houses; they see the shameful filth and darkness in which you are forced to live crowded together; they see your children growing up in ignorance and temptation, for want of fit education; they see intelligent and well-read men among you, shut out from a Freeman's just right of voting and they see, too, the noble patience and self-control with which you have as yet borne these evils. They see it, and God sees it. . . ." This address, in every line of which glowed the love, the faith, the hope of this mighty friend of the poor and downtrodden, and which, signed "A Working Parson," was posted on shop doors, on trees and public buildings, undoubtedly helped more than any other one thing to prevent unbridled license and disastrous riot in England.

Kingsley's interest in the poor of his land did not end with a single effort in their behalf. His pen, which was his sword of battle, was always at their service. "I would shed the last drop of my lifeblood for the social and political emancipation of England, as God is my witness," he passionately cried. Abuse, calumny, obloquy were heaped upon him, but his course was fixed. "My path is clear," he writes, "and I

will follow it. God has made the Word of the Lord like fire in my bones, giving me no peace until I have spoken out." And he did keep to his course. He wrote tracts, such as "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," which is a Christian prophet's denunciation of the sweating system. He wrote books like "Yeast," "with his heart's blood," and "Alton Locke" in which Carlyle found "everywhere a certain wild impetuosity, which holds the reader fast as by a spell," both books conceived and made in the interest of the poor; and "The Saint's Tragedy," which while it contains here and there some exquisite lines like these:

"Oh! that we two were Maying
Down the stream of the soft spring breeze;
Like children with violets playing
In the shade of the whispering trees.

Oh! that we two sat dreaming
On the sward of some sheep-trimm'd down,
Watching the white mist steaming
Over river and mead and town.

Oh! that we two lay sleeping
In our nest in the churchyard sod,
With our limbs at rest on the quiet earth's breast,
And our souls at home with God,

is, like the other books named, controversial. He contributed to "Politics for the People," and the "Christian Socialist," the latter a paper

whose purpose was clearly indicated by its title, and which after a brief and stormy career had for financial reasons to be discontinued. "It perished with the flag flying defiant still, and no repentance or repudiation of the cause which it had made its own." But the fighting parson, the friend of the weak, the starving, the sick, the wronged, kept on fighting.

All Kingsley's parish labors had their source in this same passion for ailing, decrepit, battered men and women, whose lives were narrow, impoverished, and without hope. Like Wordsworth's ideal country parson,

> "Man he loved
> As man; and, to the mean and the obscure
> And all the homely in their homely works,
> Transferr'd a courtesy which had no air
> Of condescension."

He was the intimate friend of every one in the parish. They familiarly called him, because they loved him, "Uncle," nor did he resent it. It has been told more than once how he became all things to all in his parish, how with the farmer he discussed the rotation of crops, and with the laborer the science of hedging and ditching, and Kingsley had never taken a course in an Agricultural College! He was at perfect ease when talking with a woman at the wash-

tub, and so was she. Children loved him, and ran after him, tugging, unafraid, at his coat. Daily he visited from house to house. What a beautiful picture, this of England's most popular preacher in his generation, the cultured, scholarly, book-loving Kingsley going from door to door in a rural community, just from sheer love of it! Once when he had planned to go to Manchester to see an exhibition of pictures—he was an artist as well as an author—he gave up the trip, because he could not leave a poor, sick woman who was counting on his daily visits. "Nothing was ever more real than Kingsley's parish visiting," was the comment of a friend who went with him one afternoon on a round of calls, and who relates how, when they had stopped at a house where was one "sick of a fever," and found the atmosphere of the stuffy little bedroom horrible, and without possibilities of ventilation, Kingsley, to the great astonishment of the members of the household, proceeded to bore with an auger which he had brought with him, several holes near the bed, that the patient might have air. He is up at five in the morning to see a dying man, and calls three times during the day. "I went," he writes, "to see E. H., and read and prayed with her. How one gets to love consumptive

patients!" Nothing was allowed to interfere with his pastoral work. He wrote books, like "Hypatia," that novel of the crumbling Roman Empire, "Hereward the Wake," with its unapproached description of the "Fens," "Westward Ho!" another historical novel, the best known and most popular English romance of the sixteenth century, "Two Years Ago," the moral of which is physical cleanliness, and "The Waterbabies," which was written for his baby boy, a book filled with "Tomfooleries," as the author says, but having a serious purpose, viz., "to make children and grown folks understand that there is a quite miraculous and divine element underlying all physical nature." Kingsley loved to write, but he never took time for it which belonged to his people. One year when his pastoral duties were unusually heavy he stole time from sleep, rising at four or five in the morning that he might write until breakfast. He had to do this, for his parish activities were many. He was in truth what he had signed himself in his appeal to the workingmen of England, "A Working Parson."

New clubs for the poor, shoe club, coal club, maternal society, a loan fund, and lending library, were established one after another, and an adult evening school was held in the rectory

all the winter months; a Sunday school, too, met there regularly; weekly cottage lectures were given in the outlying districts for the old and feeble, and a cottage school for infants was opened on the common. A singing class was started to improve the church music, which, like so many organizations, met at the parsonage, thus bringing the people under the "humanizing influences" of the Kingsley home. What a center of beneficent influences a country parsonage can be! Kingsley lectured or taught every night of the week, and held an extra Sunday evening service in a cottage a mile from the church. He set an example of painstaking care in preparing young people for confirmation which the whole English Church sought to follow. And in many other respects also was he an example. When an epidemic of diphtheria broke out in Eversley, without thought of himself, or of his family, he hastened from cottage to cottage with medicines to prevent the progress of the disease. When cholera raged in England he went to London and there, and in the country as well, began a crusade against dirt and unspeakably bad sanitary conditions. "We doctors," said an eminent London physician to Mrs. Kingsley, "all knew well your noble husband's

EVERSLEY RECTORY

EVERSLEY CHURCHYARD

labors in the cause of public health when it was too little thought of by statesmen. He led the way." In 1849 there was a fever epidemic in Eversley which gave him much anxiety and incessant work. His parishioners became frightened; it was difficult to get nurses for the sick, and Kingsley was with them at all hours. After sitting up by the bedside of a poor laborer's wife, the mother of a large family, that he might himself give the nourishment every half hour on which her life depended, his health broke down, and he was compelled to take a brief rest in Devonshire. That was the measure of Charles Kingsley's pastoral devotion! Like his Master, he spared not himself. How human he was, too, and unprofessional! Dean Stanley in the funeral discourse which he preached in Westminster Abbey the Sunday following Kingsley's death in January, 1875, said: "He was what he was, not by virtue of his office, but by virtue of what God had made him in himself. He was, we might almost say, a layman in the guise or disguise of a clergyman—fishing with the fisherman, hunting with the huntsman, able to hold his own in tent and camp, with courtier or with soldier; an example that a genial companion may be a Christian gentleman, that a Christian clergy-

man need not be a member of a separate caste, and a stranger to the common interests of his countrymen." Those who attended service in the Eversley Church were astonished at the absence of professionalism in the conduct of worship. When a fire broke out on the heath, threatening the fir trees which he loved so deeply, although it happened right in the midst of a service in the church, he handed over the service to his curate and went out to lead the fire-fighters. To him that was as religious an act as the conduct of public worship. On another occasion, in going from the altar to the pulpit, he suddenly disappeared and later it was learned that his attention had been drawn to a hurt butterfly, which had fallen to the floor, and was in danger of being trampled upon, and lifting it up he had carried it to safety in the vestry. There was nothing incongruous to him in this, nor was it irreverent, as it might have seemed to Keble. Kindness was of larger value in his eyes than even decorum in public worship. He was a strangely interesting man always; gentle as a woman, yet working "with a twenty-parson power"; versatile—it was remarkable how many things he could do well; he had a twentieth-century charity worker's horror of almsgiving, and yet found it hard to

refuse any one; he was brusque, yet Lowell, when he was being shown by him around Chester Cathedral, thought him thoroughly kind and patient; he was regarded as a liberal in theology, but few men have held more tenaciously to the Scriptures as the solution for all problems than he did; he was "a strange mixture of earnestness and fun, deep reverence and rollicking cheerfulness, serious without falsity or affectation, bright and brimful with high spirits, yet with a real sanctity visible in all he does and says, without a shadow of sanctimoniousness, varying his occupations from grave to gay without losing his moral equilibrium, work and relaxation alternating with each other to keep up the intellectual balance."

As a preacher Kingsley attracted attention from the very beginning. It must have been in part from the intensity of his utterances and in part from the immediateness of his message. Bishop Sumner thought his sermons too colloquial, but Kingsley was always unconventional, and it was his unconventionality of manner and phrase which helped to gain for him a hearing. It was seen, too, that his preaching was a present message. His burning concern was for the immediate good of men as in distinction from their celestial happiness.

"What is the use," he cried, "of talking to the hungry pauper about heaven? 'Sir,' as my clerk said to me yesterday, 'there is a weight upon their hearts, and they care for no hope and no change, for they know they can be no worse off than they are.' And so they have no spirit to arise and go to their Father." His message, therefore, was not ancient philosophy or mediæval theology. It had to do rather with what was going on in Eversley and in England at that very time, the sufferings, the oppressions, the miseries, the sins, the longings of his own people, and of his generation. There were other characteristics, many of them, a simplicity which was pleasing alike to rustic and prince, a clearness like "the clearness of a narrow trout-stream such as his soul loved," genuineness, large-heartedness like the sweep of the sea at Clovelly, definiteness, transparent truthfulness, terrible earnestness, emotional force, reminding one at times of Savonarola, an utter absence of artificiality, an illustrative picturesqueness. These and other qualities made him acceptable both as a court and as a village preacher. "At times eloquent beyond any man I ever heard" was the tribute an old student paid to his pulpit power. Kingsley's curate said of it that while it was befitting

his genius that he should be heard in Chester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, where crowds could listen to his peerless eloquence, in his judgment he was never heard to better advantage than in his own village pulpit. "I have sometimes been so moved by what he there said," he adds, "that I could scarcely restrain myself from calling out, as he poured forth words now exquisitely sad and tender, and now grand and heroic, with an insight into character and knowledge of the world, and a sustained eloquence, which, each in its own way, was matchless."

Distinction, fame, came to the Eversley parish-minister. Kingsley was not "lost in the country." It was not long before a path was worn to his door. Men and women of note, Maurice, Dean Stanley, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Tennyson, Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands, Tom Hughes, Matthew Arnold, and a multitude of others found their way to the Eversley rectory. From all over the world, from Africa, India, China, America, letters came to him, some of them addressed merely "Charles Kingsley, England." A country parish had become a world center. From everywhere people wrote to him concerning their difficulties. Strangers asked advice on

delicate questions of conscience and conduct. "The skeptic dared tell him of his doubts; the profligate of his fall." The timid seeker after truth turned to him to share in his quiet confidence, the hungry and cold to feel the warmth of his honest heart. The Oxford movement was at high tide, and knowing his attitude toward it, mothers wrote for help in rescuing their daughters from the influence of Anglican confessors; ministers sought his assistance in saving their people from following the course of Newman and others; "while women hovering between the Church of England and Rome, between the 'sanctity' of a nunnery and the monotonous duties of a family life, laid their difficulties before the author of the 'Saint's Tragedy'; and he who shrank on principle from the office of father-confessor had the work thrust upon him by numbers whom he never met face to face in this world." Moreover the Eversley Church was now crowded. Soldiers came over from the camp at Aldershot. Men and women came out from London. Visitors to England from the colonies, and other lands, journeyed to Eversley to hear Kingsley preach. One Sunday, when twelve carriages were standing near the church, the simple-hearted sexton was heard to say that

he could not understand why there was "such flitting to and fro to our church on Sundays." Kingsley did not like this notoriety. "I cannot bear having my place turned into a fair on Sundays, and all this talking after church," he often said, and that he might avoid meeting strangers in the churchyard, which to him was always a sacred place, he would escape after service through the vestry door into his garden. But it mattered not, people continued to invade the country parish in order that they might see and hear the man who had put it on the map of the world.

In 1859 he preached for the first time before Queen Victoria, at Buckingham Palace, and shortly after was made one of her chaplains, and thereupon he took his turn as preacher in the royal chapels of Whitehall and Saint James, and once every year he officiated in the Queen's private chapel at Windsor. His relations with the royal family were ever thereafter cordial, and he received many marks of royal favor. In 1861 he began to give private lectures to the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. He was offered the regius professorship of modern history at Cambridge, which he accepted, continuing, of course, his connection with Eversley, and became one of

the most popular of lecturers in that university. Max Müller says that Kingsley's lectures were more largely attended than any in Cambridge. In 1869 Mr. Gladstone asked him to accept the canonry of Chester Cathedral, and a few years later wrote him: "I have to propose to you, with the sanction of her Majesty, that in lieu of your canonry at Chester, you should accept the vacant stall in Westminster Abbey. I am sorry to injure the people of Chester; but I must sincerely hope that your voice will be heard within the Abbey, and in your own right," and it was. All these honors were very grateful to Kingsley, who had had through the years more than his share of abuse and reproach, but nothing could draw him away from Eversley. He would accept no ecclesiastical preferment which would compel him to leave his country parish. "Even a deanery I should shrink from," he wrote to a friend who had congratulated him on some rumored promotion; "the home to which I was ordained, where I came when I was married, I intend shall be my last home: for go where I will in this hardworking world, I shall take care to get my last sleep in Eversley churchyard." There were years when he did not even go to London often, although it was

CHARLES KINGSLEY'S GRAVE

less than forty miles distant, his love of the country and of his home was so great. "I love home and green fields more and more, and never lust either after Babylon or the Continent." Why should he? His heart was in Eversley, and he was, and will be for all time, the prophet of

> "Do the work that's nearest,
> Though it's dull at whiles,
> Helping, when we meet them,
> Lame dogs over stiles."

Life in that quiet parish was never uneventful. He never found it dull. Moreover, he was able to watch the movements of society and follow the current of events, with finer discernment and a saner judgment at a distance than nearer at hand.

And not only was he a blessing to Eversley, but Eversley was a blessing to him. The awayness, the calm, the leisure for writing and studying, the opportunity for pastoral clinics, the blue sky under which to fight and pray, all these gave him opportunities, as they are offered to every man situated as Charles Kingsley was, for self-improvement and soul culture, which a few men covet, and which all might well desire. Writing on his thirty-eighth birthday, June 12th, 1857, to Tom

Hughes, Kingsley said: "God has been very good to me, and I cannot help feeding a hope that I may fight a good fight yet before I die, and get something done. I've done little enough yet. The best work ever I've done has been my plain parish work, and that I've done miserably ill." Others thought better of his work, though, than he did. Maurice, whom Kingsley called the most beautiful human soul God in his mercy had allowed him to meet, was heard to say that Charles Kingsley was the best son, the best father, the best husband, the best parish priest he had ever known.

When he died he might have been buried in Westminster Abbey, where sleep many of England's noblest and mightiest, but, like his Master, "having loved his own he loved them unto the end," and as he desired he was buried in the Eversley churchyard, and on the white marble cross, placed by his wife above his grave, are carved, under a spray of his favorite passion flower, the words of his choice, which better than any others epitomize the story of his life:

AMAVIMUS, AMAMUS, AMABIMUS.

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